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THE ARCH OF TITUS

WORKS

OF

LORD BYRON.

VOL. XIII.

...wn by J. M. W. Turner, R.A. Engraved by E. Finden

The Walls of Rome

Tome of Caius Sestius.

THE

WORKS

OF

LORD BYRON:

WITH

HIS LETTERS AND JOURNALS,

AND HIS LIFE

BY THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

IN SEVENTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. XIII.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1833.

TILDEN LIBRARY
1895

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Volume consists of four pieces, written, two of them at Ravenna in 1821, the others at Pisa in 1822.

When this Edition was first announced, nothing more was designed than an exact reprint of Mr. Moore's Notices, and Lord Byron's Works in prose and verse, *as they had previously been given to the public;* and the printer calculated that the whole might be comprised in fourteen volumes.

While, however, the Notices of Lord Byron's Life were for the second time passing through the press, it was suggested to the Publisher, that the time was come when the Public had a right to look for such notes and illustrations to Lord Byron's text, as are usually appended to the pages of a deceased author of established and permanent popularity. This suggestion was

acted upon; and its adoption has, apparently, given general satisfaction. These additions will extend the Work to seventeen volumes; the last of which will include a very copious and careful Index to the whole collection.

London, December 12. 1832.

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HEAVEN AND EARTH;

A MYSTERY,

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS, CHAP. VI.

"And it came to pass.... that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

"And woman wailing for her demon lover."—COLERIDGE.

[" HEAVEN and Earth" was written at Ravenna, in October, 1821. In forwarding it to Mr. Murray, in the following month, Lord Byron says — " Enclosed is a lyrical drama, entitled ' A Mystery.' You will find it pious enough, I trust — at least some of the chorus might have been written by Sternhold and Hopkins themselves for that, and perhaps for melody. As it is longer, and more lyrical and Greek, than I intended at first, I have not divided it into acts, but called what I have sent *Part First;* as there is a suspension of the action, which may either close there without impropriety, or be continued in a way that I have in view. I wish the first part to be published before the second; because, if it don't succeed, it is better to stop there, than to go on in a fruitless experiment."

Though without delay revised by Mr. Gifford, and printed, this " First Part" was not published till 1822, when it appeared in the second number of the " Liberal." The " Mystery" was never completed.—E.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Angels. — SAMIASA.
AZAZIEL.
RAPHAEL the Archangel.
Men. — NOAH and his Sons.
IRAD.
JAPHET.

Women. — ANAH.
AHOLIBAMAH.

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth. — *Chorus of Mortals.*

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

PART I.

SCENE I. (1)

A woody and mountainous district near Mount Ararat. — Time, midnight.

Enter ANAH *and* AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. OUR father sleeps: it is the hour when they
Who love us are accustom'd to descend
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky Ararat: —
How my heart beats!

(1) [The great power of this "Mystery" is in its fearless and daring simplicity. Lord Byron faces at once all the grandeur of his sublime subject. He seeks for nothing, but it rises before him in its death-doomed magnificence. Man, or angel, or demon, the being who mourns, or laments, or exults, is driven to speak by his own soul. The angels deign not to use many words, even to their beautiful paramours; and they scorn Noah and his sententious sons. The first scene is a woody and mountainous district, near Mount Ararat; and the time midnight. Mortal creatures, conscious of their own wickedness, have heard awful predictions of the threatened flood, and all their lives are darkened with terror. But the sons of God have been dwellers on earth, and women's hearts have been stirred by the beauty of these celestial visitants. Anah and Aholibamah, two of these angel-stricken maidens, come wandering along while others sleep, to pour forth their invocations to their demon lovers. They are of very different characters: Anah, soft, gentle, and submissive; Aholibamah, proud, impetuous, and aspiring — the one loving in fear, and the other in ambition. — WILSON.]

Aho. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.
Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble.
Aho. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.
Anah. My sister, though
I love Azaziel more than —— oh, too much!
What was I going to say? my heart grows impious.
Aho. And where is the impiety of loving
Celestial natures?
Anah. But, Aholibamah,
I love our God less since his angel loved me:
This cannot be of good; and though I know not
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.
Aho. Then wed thee
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin!
There's Japhet loves thee well, hath loved thee long:
Marry, and bring forth dust!
Anah. I should have loved
Azaziel not less were he mortal; yet
I am glad he is not. I can not outlive him.
And when I think that his immortal wings
Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
Of the poor child of clay which so adored him,
As he adores the Highest, death becomes
Less terrible; but yet I pity him:
His grief will be of ages, or at least
Mine would be such for him, were I the seraph,
And he the perishable.
Aho. Rather say,

ıat he will single forth some other daughter
: Earth, and love her as he once loved Anah.
Anah. And if it should be so, and she loved him,
:tter thus than that he should weep for me.
Aho. If I thought thus of Samiasa's love,
ll seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from me.
ıt to our invocation!—'Tis the hour.
Anah. Seraph!
From thy sphere!
Whatever star contain thy glory;
In the eternal depths of heaven
Albeit thou watchest with "the seven," (1)
Though through space infinite and hoary
Before thy bright wings worlds be driven,
Yet hear!
Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!
And though she nothing is to thee,
Yet think that thou art all to her.
Thou canst not tell,—and never be
Such pangs decreed to aught save me,—
The bitterness of tears.
Eternity is in thine years,
Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;
With me thou canst not sympathise,
Except in love, and there thou must
Acknowledge that more loving dust
Ne'er wept beneath the skies.
Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou see'st
The face of him who made thee great,

1) The archangels, said to be seven in number, and to occupy the hth rank in the celestial hierarchy.

As he hath made me of the least
Of those cast out from Eden's gate:
Yet, Seraph dear!
Oh hear!
For thou hast loved me, and I would not die
Until I know what I must die in knowing,
That thou forget'st in thine eternity
Her whose heart death could not keep from o'erflowing
For thee, immortal essence as thou art!
Great is their love who love in sin and fear;
And such, I feel, are waging in my heart
A war unworthy: to an Adamite
Forgive, my Seraph! that such thoughts appear,
For sorrow is our element;
Delight
An Eden kept afar from sight,
Though sometimes with our visions blent.
The hour is near
Which tells me we are not abandon'd quite.—
Appear! Appear!
Seraph!
My own Azaziel! be but here,
And leave the stars to their own light.

Aho. Samiasa!
Wheresoe'er
Thou rulest in the upper air—
Or warring with the spirits who may dare
Dispute with him
Who made all empires, empire; or recalling
Some wandering star, which shoots through the abyss,

Whose tenants dying, while their world is falling,
Share the dim destiny of clay in this;
Or joining with the inferior cherubim,
Thou deignest to partake their hymn—
Samiasa!
I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.
Many may worship thee, that will I not:
If that thy spirit down to mine may move thee,
Descend and share my lot!
Though I be form'd of clay,
And thou of beams
More bright than those of day
On Eden's streams,
Thine immortality can not repay
With love more warm than mine
My love. There is a ray
In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.
It may be hidden long: death and decay
Our mother Eve bequeath'd us—but my heart
Defies it: though this life must pass away,
Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part?
Thou art immortal—so am I: I feel—
I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All pains, all tears, all fears, and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth—"Thou liv'st for ever!"
But if it be in joy
I know not, nor would know;
That secret rests with the Almighty giver
Who folds in clouds the fonts of bliss and woe.

But thee and me he never can destroy;
Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm; we are
Of as eternal essence, and must war
With him if he will war with us: with *thee*
I can share all things, even immortal sorrow;
For thou hast ventured to share life with *me*,
And shall *I* shrink from thine eternity?
No! though the serpent's sting should pierce me thorough,
And thou thyself wert like the serpent, coil
Around me still! and I will smile,
And curse thee not; but hold
Thee in as warm a fold
As —— but descend; and prove
A mortal's love
For an immortal. If the skies contain
More joy than thou canst give and take, remain! (1)

Anah. Sister! sister! I view them winging
Their bright way through the parted night.

Aho. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
As though they bore to-morrow's light.

Anah. But if our father see the sight!

Aho. He would but deem it was the moon
Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
An hour too soon.

Anah. They come! *he* comes! — Azaziel!

Aho. Haste
To meet them! Oh! for wings to bear

(1) [This invocation is extremely beautiful: its chief beauty lies in the continuous and meandering flow of its impassioned versification. At its close, — and it might well win down to earth erring angels from heaven, — the maidens disappear in the midnight darkness, hoping the *presence of* their celestial lovers. — WILSON.]

My spirit, while they hover there,
To Samiasa's breast!
Anah. Lo! they have kindled all the west,
Like a returning sunset;—lo!
On Ararat's late secret crest
A mild and many-colour'd bow,
The remnant of their flashing path,
Now shines! and now, behold! it hath
Return'd to night, as rippling foam,
Which the leviathan hath lash'd
From his unfathomable home,
When sporting on the face of the calm deep,
Subsides soon after he again hath dash'd
Down, down, to where the ocean's fountains sleep.(1)
Aho. They have touch'd earth! Samiasa!
Anah. My Azaziel!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.(2)

Enter IRAD *and* JAPHET.

Irad. Despond not: wherefore wilt thou wander thus
To add thy silence to the silent night,

(1) [Lord Byron here takes a wide career, and is sometimes obscure and confused; but the flashes of fire continually break through, and illumine the clouds of smoke and vapour. The extravagance is dictated by passion. His muse, even in her riddles and digressions, has a sybil-like, prophetic fury. — JEFFREY.]

(2) [In the second scene, Japhet, Noah's son, and Irad — the earthly and despised lovers of the two maidens — appear. Their talk is somewhat dull; which, we presume, is natural in such circumstances. — WILSON.]

And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?
They cannot aid thee.
Japh. But they soothe me—now
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
Methinks a being that is beautiful
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
The eternal beauty of undying things.
Oh, Anah!
Irad. But she loves thee not.
Japh. Alas!
Irad. And proud Aholibamah spurns me also.
Japh. I feel for thee too.
Irad. Let her keep her pride,
Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn:
It may be, time too will avenge it.
Japh. Canst thou
Find joy in such a thought?
Irad. Nor joy nor sorrow.
I loved her well; I would have loved her better,
Had love been met with love: as 'tis, I leave her
To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.
Japh. What destinies?
Irad. I have some cause to think
She loves another.
Japh. Anah!
Irad. No; her sister.
Japh. What other?
Irad. That I know not; but her air,
If not her words, tells me she loves another.
Japh. Ay, but not Anah: she but loves her God.
Irad. Whate'er she loveth, so she loves thee not,
What can it profit thee? (1)

(1) [This is one of those bitter, taunting sarcasms that escape from

Japh. True, nothing; but
I love.
Irad. And so did I.
Japh. And now thou lov'st not,
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou happier?
Irad. Yes.
Japh. I pity thee.
Irad. Me! why?
Japh. For being happy,
Deprived of that which makes my misery.
Irad. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost for more shekels
Than all our father's herds would bring if weigh'd
Against the metal of the sons of Cain —
The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
As if such useless and discolour'd trash,
The refuse of the earth, could be received
For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all
Our flocks and wilderness afford. — Go, Japhet,
Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the moon —
I must back to my rest.
Japh. And so would I
If I could rest.
Irad. Thou wilt not to our tents then?
Japh. No, Irad; I will to the cavern, whose
Mouth they say opens from the internal world
To let the inner spirits of the earth
Forth when they walk its surface.

Lord Byron's pen, in spite of himself. Japhet is afterwards introduced alone, in a mountainous cave; and his soliloquy, bemoaning his own fate, and the approaching destruction of mankind, is interrupted by a laugh of demons, rejoicing over the event. This scene is terrific. — JEFFREY.]

Irad. Wherefore so?
What wouldst thou there?
Japh. Soothe further my sad spirit
With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless spot,
And I am hopeless.
Irad. But 'tis dangerous;
Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with terrors.
I must go with thee.
Japh. Irad, no; believe me
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.
Irad. But evil things will be thy foe the more
As not being of them: turn thy steps aside,
Or let mine be with thine.
Japh. No, neither, Irad;
I must proceed alone.
Irad. Then peace be with thee!
[*Exit* IRAD.
Japh. (*solus*). Peace! I have sought it where it should be found,
In love—with love, too, which perhaps deserved it;
And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart—
A weakness of the spirit—listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep—
Have come upon me. Peace! what peace? the calm
Of desolation, and the stillness of
The untrodden forest, only broken by
The sweeping tempest through its groaning boughs;
Such is the sullen or the fitful state
Of my mind overworn. The earth's grown wicked,
And many signs and portents have proclaim'd
A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming doom

To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!
When the dread hour denounced shall open wide
The fountains of the deep, how mightest thou
Have lain within this bosom, folded from
The elements; this bosom, which in vain
Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more vainly,
While thine——Oh, God! at least remit to her
Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the failing
As a star in the clouds, which cannot quench,
Although they obscure it for an hour. My Anah!
How would I have adored thee, but thou wouldst not;
And still would I redeem thee—see thee live
When ocean is earth's grave, and, unopposed
By rock or shallow, the leviathan,
Lord of the shoreless sea and watery world,
Shall wonder at his boundlessness of realm.

[*Exit* JAPHET.

Enter NOAH *and* SHEM.

Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet?

Shem. He went forth,
According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
He said; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
Towards Anah's tents, round which he hovers nightly,
Like a dove round and round its pillaged nest;
Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
Which opens to the heart of Ararat.

Noah. What doth he there? It is an evil spot
Upon an earth all evil; for things worse
Than even wicked men resort there: he
Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
Although he could not wed her, if she loved him,

And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy hearts
Of men! that one of my blood, knowing well
The destiny and evil of these days,
And that the hour approacheth, should indulge
In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the way;
He must be sought for!

Shem. Go not forward, father:
I will seek Japhet.

Noah. Do not fear for me:
All evil things are powerless on the man
Selected by Jehovah.—Let us on.

Shem. To the tents of the father of the sisters?

Noah. No; to the cavern of the Caucasus.

[*Exeunt* NOAH *and* SHEM.

SCENE III.

The mountains.—A cavern, and the rocks of Caucasus.

Japh. (*solus*). Ye wilds, that look eternal; and thou cave,
Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye mountains,
So varied and so terrible in beauty;
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone
In perpendicular places, where the foot
Of man would tremble, could he reach them—yes,
Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed, rent, hurl'd
Before the mass of waters; and yon cave,
Which seems to lead into a lower world,
Shall have its depths search'd by the sweeping wave,

And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!
And man——Oh, men! my fellow-beings! Who
Shall weep above your universal grave,
Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My kinsmen,
Alas! what am I better than ye are,
That I must live beyond ye? Where shall be
The pleasant places where I thought of Anah
While I had hope? or the more savage haunts,
Scarce less beloved, where I despair'd for her?
And can it be!—Shall yon exulting peak,
Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?
No more to have the morning sun break forth,
And scatter back the mists in floating folds
From its tremendous brow? no more to have
Day's broad orb drop behind its head at even,
Leaving it with a crown of many hues?
No more to be the beacon of the world,
For angels to alight on, as the spot
Nearest the stars? And can those words "*no more*"
Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things reserved
By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May
He preserve *them*, and *I not* have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
A doom which even some serpent, with his mate,
Shall 'scape to save his kind to be prolong'd,
To hiss and sting through some emerging world,
Reeking and dank from out the slime, whose ooze
Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this until
The salt morass subside into a sphere
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,

The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,
Of yet quick myriads of all life? How much
Breath will be still'd at once! All beauteous world!
So young, so mark'd out for destruction, I
With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,
And night by night, thy number'd days and nights.
I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
Whose love had made me love thee more; but as
A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
Such as — Oh God! and canst thou — [*He pauses.*(1)

A rushing sound from the cavern is heard, and shouts of laughter — afterwards a Spirit passes.

Japh. In the name
Of the Most High, what art thou?

Spirit (*laughs*). Ha! ha! ha!

Japh. By all that earth holds holiest, speak!

Spirit (*laughs*). Ha! ha!

Japh. By the approaching deluge! by the earth
Which will be strangled by the ocean! by
The deep which will lay open all her fountains!
The heaven which will convert her clouds to seas,
And the Omnipotent who makes and crushes!
Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,
Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to me!
Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh?

Spirit. Why weep'st thou?

(1) [This soliloquy has the fault of being too long and wire-drawn. At its close, spirits rush from the cavern, and exult in the approaching calamity of the world: a dialogue ensues between Japhet and one of them, and a chorus is sung by a body of them, part of which is truly noble. — CAMPBELL.]

Japh. For earth and all her children.

Spirit. Ha! ha! ha! [*Spirit vanishes.*

Japh. How the fiend mocks the tortures of a world,
The coming desolation of an orb,
On which the sun shall rise and warm no life!
How the earth sleeps! and all that in it is
Sleep too upon the very eve of death!
Why should they wake to meet it? What is here,
Which look like death in life, and speak like things
Born ere this dying world? They come like clouds!

[*Various Spirits pass from the cavern.*

Spirit. Rejoice!
The abhorred race
Which could not keep in Eden their high place,
But listen'd to the voice
Of knowledge without power,
Are nigh the hour
Of death!
Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor sorrow,
Nor years, nor heart-break, nor time's sapping motion,
Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-morrow!
Earth shall be ocean!
And no breath,
Save of the winds, be on the unbounded wave!
Angels shall tire their wings, but find no spot:
Not even a rock from out the liquid grave
Shall lift its point to save,
Or show the place where strong Despair hath died,
After long looking o'er the ocean wide
For the expected ebb which cometh not:

All shall be void,
Destroy'd!
Another element shall be the lord
Of life, and the abhorr'd
Children of dust be quench'd; and of each hue
Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue;
And of the variegated mountain
Shall nought remain
Unchanged, or of the level plain;
Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in vain:
All merged within the universal fountain,
Man, earth, and fire, shall die,
And sea and sky
Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.
Upon the foam
Who shall erect a home?
Japh. (*coming forward*). My sire!
Earth's seed shall not expire;
Only the evil shall be put away
From day.
Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the waste!
Who howl your hideous joy
When God destroys whom you dare not destroy;
Hence! haste!
Back to your inner caves!
Until the waves
Shall search you in your secret place,
And drive your sullen race
Forth, to be roll'd upon the tossing winds
In restless wretchedness along all space!
Spirit. Son of the saved!
When thou and thine have braved

The wide and warring element;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
Shall thou and thine be good or happy?—No!
Thy new world and new race shall be of woe—
Less goodly in their aspect, in their years
Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the world in pride,
The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal bride.
Thine shall be nothing of the past, save tears.
And art thou not ashamed
Thus to survive,
And eat, and drink, and wive?
With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,
As even to hear this wide destruction named,
Without such grief and courage, as should rather
Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
Than seek a shelter with thy favour'd father,
And build thy city o'er the drown'd earth's grave?
Who would outlive their kind,
Except the base and blind?
Mine
Hateth thine
As of a different order in the sphere,
But not our own.
There is not one who hath not left a throne
Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness here,
Rather than see his mates endure alone.
Go, wretch! and give
A life like thine to other wretches—live!
And when the annihilating waters roar
Above what they have done,
Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,

And scorn thy sire as the surviving one!
Thyself for being his son!

Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern.

Rejoice!
No more the human voice
Shall vex our joys in middle air
With prayer;
No more
Shall they adore;
And we, who ne'er for ages have adored
The prayer-exacting Lord,
To whom the omission of a sacrifice
Is vice;
We, we shall view the deep's salt sources pour'd
Until one element shall do the work
Of all in chaos; until they,
The creatures proud of their poor clay,
Shall perish, and their bleached bones shall lurk
In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where
The deep shall follow to their latest lair;
Where even the brutes, in their despair,
Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother;
Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky:
While a brief truce
Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use;
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation

Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking soil
Into a world, shall give again to Time
New beings—years—diseases—sorrow—crime—
With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until——

Japh. (*interrupting them*). The eternal will
Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil; and redeem
Unto himself all times, all things;
And, gather'd under his almighty wings,
Abolish hell!
And to the expiated Earth
Restore the beauty of her birth,
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well!

Spirits. And when shall take effect this wondrous spell?

Japh. When the Redeemer cometh; first in pain,
And then in glory.

Spirit. Meantime still struggle in the mortal chain,
Till earth wax hoary;
War with yourselves, and hell, and heaven, in vain,
Until the clouds look gory
With the blood reeking from each battle plain;
New times, new climes, new arts, new men; but still,
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest ill,
Shall be amongst your race in different forms;
But the same moral storms

Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves. (1)

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice!
Mortal, farewell!
Hark! hark! already we can hear the voice
Of growing ocean's gloomy swell;
The winds, too, plume their piercing wings;
The clouds have nearly fill'd their springs;
The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,
And heaven set wide her windows; (2) while mankind
View, unacknowledged, each tremendous token—
Still, as they were from the beginning, blind.
We hear the sound they cannot hear, [sphere;
The mustering thunders of the threatening
Yet a few hours their coming is delay'd;
Their flashing banners, folded still on high,
Yet undisplay'd,
Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.
Howl! howl! oh Earth!
Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth:
Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink below
The ocean's overflow!
The wave shall break upon your cliffs; and shells,
The little shells, of ocean's least things be
Deposed where now the eagle's offspring dwells—

(1) "And there were giants in the earth in those days, and after; mighty men, which were of old, men of renown."—*Genesis.*

(2) "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."—*Ibid.*

How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless sea!
And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,
Unanswer'd, save by the encroaching swell;—
While man shall long in vain for his broad wings,
The wings which could not save:— [brings
Where could he rest them, while the whole space
Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his grave?
Brethren, rejoice!
And loudly lift each superhuman voice—
All die,
Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed—
The seed of Seth,
Exempt for future sorrow's sake from death.
But of the sons of Cain
None shall remain;
And all his goodly daughters
Must lie beneath the desolating waters;
Or, floating upward, with their long hair laid
Along the wave, the cruel heaven upbraid,
Which would not spare
Beings even in death so fair.
It is decreed,
All die!
And to the universal human cry
The universal silence shall succeed!
Fly, brethren, fly!
But still rejoice!
We fell!
They fall!
So perish all
These petty foes of Heaven who shrink from hell!
[*The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.*

Japh. (*solus*). God hath proclaim'd the destiny of earth;
My father's ark of safety hath announced it;
The very demons shriek it from their caves;
The scroll (1) of Enoch prophesied it long
In silent books, which, in their silence, say
More to the mind than thunder to the ear:
And yet men listen'd not, nor listen; but
Walk darkling to their doom; which, though so nigh,
Shakes them no more in their dim disbelief,
Than their last cries shall shake the Almighty purpose,
Or deaf obedient ocean, which fulfils it.
No sign yet hangs its banner in the air;
The clouds are few, and of their wonted texture;
The sun will rise upon the earth's last day
As on the fourth day of creation, when
God said unto him, "Shine!" and he broke forth
Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
Unform'd forefather of mankind—but roused
Before the human orison the earlier
Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
Which in the open firmament of heaven
Have wings like angels, and like them salute
Heaven first each day before the Adamites:
Their matins now draw nigh—the east is kindling—
And they will sing! and day will break! Both near,
So near the awful close! For these must drop
Their outworn pinions on the deep; and day,
After the bright course of a few brief morrows,—
Ay, day will rise; but upon what?—a chaos,

(1) The book of Enoch, preserved by the Ethiopians, is said by them to be anterior to the flood.

Which was ere day; and which, renew'd, makes time
Nothing! for, without life, what are the hours?
No more to dust than is eternity
Unto Jehovah, who created both.
Without him, even eternity would be
A void: without man, time, as made for man,
Dies with man, and is swallow'd in that deep
Which has no fountain; as his race will be
Devour'd by that which drowns his infant world.—
What have we here? Shapes of both earth and air?
No—*all* of heaven, they are so beautiful.
I cannot trace their features; but their forms,
How lovelily they move along the side
Of the grey mountain, scattering its mist!
And after the swart savage spirits, whose
Infernal immortality pour'd forth
Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall be
Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
To tell me the reprieve of our young world,
For which I have so often pray'd—They come!
Anah! oh, God! and with her (1)——

Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, *and* AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. Japhet!

Sam. Lo!

A son of Adam!

(1) [The spirits disappear soaring upwards, and Japhet has again recourse to a very fine soliloquy. He is now joined by Anah and Aholibamah, who are accompanied by the two angels, Samiasa and Azaziel. The angels seem somewhat sulky, and are extremely laconic; they look like Quakers yet unmoved by the spirit — dull dogs. But Japhet takes them to task very severely. Noah and Shem now join the party, and a conversation ensues between them all, neither very spirited nor very edifying — when enters Raphael the Archangel, who holds a highly poetical dialogue with Samiasa. — WILSON.]

Aza. What doth the earth-born here,
While all his race are slumbering?

Japh. Angel! what
Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst be on high?

Aza. Know'st thou not, or forget'st thou, that a part
Of our great function is to guard thine earth?

Japh. But all good angels have forsaken earth,
Which is condemn'd; nay, even the evil fly
The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
In vain, and long, and still to be beloved!
Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in those hours
When no good spirit longer lights below?

Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee; yet, yet
Forgive me——

Japh. May the Heaven, which soon no more
Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly tempted.

Aho. Back to thy tents, insulting son of Noah!
We know thee not.

Japh. The hour may come when thou
May'st know me better; and thy sister know
Me still the same which I have ever been.

Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been
Upright before his God, whate'er thy gifts,
And thy words seem of sorrow, mix'd with wrath,
How have Azaziel, or myself, brought on thee
Wrong?

Japh. Wrong! the greatest of all wrongs; but thou
Say'st well, though she be dust, I did not, could not,
Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have said
That word so often! but now say it, ne'er
To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er
Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the power

To save this beautiful—*these* beautiful
Children of Cain?

Aza. From what?

Japh. And is it so,
That ye too know not? Angels! angels! ye
Have shared man's sin, and, it may be, now must
Partake his punishment; or, at the least,
My sorrow.

Sam. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till now
To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.

Japh. And hath not the Most High expounded them?
Then ye are lost, as they are lost.

Aho. So be it!
If they love as they are loved, they will not shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare
An immortality of agonies
With Samiasa!

Anah. Sister! sister! speak not
Thus.

Aza. Fearest thou, my Anah?

Anah. Yes, for thee:
I would resign the greater remnant of
This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

Japh. It is for *him,* then! for the seraph thou
Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou hast not
Left thy God too! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and an immortal, cannot
Be happy or be hallow'd. We are sent
Upon the earth to toil and die; and they
Are made to minister on high unto

The Highest: but if he can *save* thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid
Alone can do so.

Anah. Ah! he speaks of death.

Sam. Of death to *us!* and those who are with us!
But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.

Japh. I grieve not for myself, nor fear;
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but those
Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found
Righteous enough to save his children. Would
His power was greater of redemption! or
That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy, she,
The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of
The seed of Seth!

Aho. And dost thou think that we,
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's, blood
Warm in our veins, — strong Cain! who was begotten
In Paradise, — would mingle with Seth's children?
Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's dotage?
No, not to save all earth, were earth in peril!
Our race hath alway dwelt apart from thine
From the beginning, and shall do so ever.

Japh. I did not speak to thee, Aholibamah!
Too much of the forefather whom thou vauntest
Has come down in that haughty blood which springs
From him who shed the first, and that a brother's!
But thou, my Anah! let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not; 'tis a word I cannot
Part with, although I must from thee. My Anah!

Thou who dost rather make me dream that Abel
Had left a daughter, whose pure pious race
Survived in thee, so much unlike thou art
The rest of the stern Cainites, save in beauty,
For all of them are fairest in their favour——
Aho. (*interrupting him*). And wouldst thou have
her like our father's foe
In mind, in soul? If *I* partook thy thought,
And dream'd that aught of *Abel* was in *her!*—
Get thee hence, son of Noah; thou makest strife.
Japh. Offspring of Cain, thy father did so!
Aho. But
He slew not Seth: and what hast thou to do
With other deeds between his God and him?
Japh. Thou speakest well: his God hath judged
him, and
I had not named his deed, but that thyself
Didst seem to glory in him, nor to shrink
From what he had done.
Aho. He was our fathers' father;
The eldest born of man, the strongest, bravest,
And most enduring:—Shall I blush for him
From whom we had our being? Look upon
Our race; behold their stature and their beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of days——
Japh. They are number'd.
Aho. Be it so! but while yet their hours endure,
I glory in my brethren and our fathers.
Japh. My sire and race but glory in their God,
Anah! and thou?——
Anah. Whate'er our God decrees,
The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,

And will endeavour patiently to obey.
But could I dare to pray in his dread hour
Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
It would not be to live, alone exempt
Of all my house. My sister! oh, my sister!
What were the world, or other worlds, or all
The brightest future, without the sweet past—
Thy love—my father's—all the life, and all
The things which sprang up with me, like the stars,
Making my dim existence radiant with
Soft lights which were not mine? Aholibamah!
Oh! if there should be mercy—seek it, find it:
I abhor death, because that thou must die.

Aho. What, hath this dreamer, with his father's ark,
The bugbear he hath built to scare the world,
Shaken *my* sister? Are *we* not the loved
Of seraphs? and if we were not, must we
Cling to a son of Noah for our lives?
Rather than thus—— But the enthusiast dreams
The worst of dreams, the fantasies engender'd
By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
Shall shake these solid mountains, this firm earth,
And bid those clouds and waters take a shape
Distinct from that which we and all our sires
Have seen them wear on their eternal way?
Who shall do this?

Japh. He whose one word produced them.

Aho. Who *heard* that word?

Japh. The universe, which leap'd
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou still in scorn?

Turn to thy seraphs: if they attest it not,
They are none.

Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God!

Aho. I have ever hail'd our Maker, Samiasa,
As thine, and mine: a God of love, not sorrow.

Japh. Alas! what else is love but sorrow? Even
He who made earth in love had soon to grieve
Above its first and best inhabitants.

Aho. 'Tis said so.

Japh. It is even so.

Enter NOAH *and* SHEM.

Noah. Japhet! What
Dost thou here with these children of the wicked?
Dread'st thou not to partake their coming doom?

Japh. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek
To save an earth-born being; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.

Noah. These are they, then,
Who leave the throne of God, to take them wives
From out the race of Cain; the sons of heaven,
Who seek earth's daughters for their beauty?

Aza. Patriarch!
Thou hast said it.

Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such communion!
Has not God made a barrier between earth
And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?

Sam. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?
Did God not love what he had made? And what
Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love?

Noah. I am
But man, and was not made to judge mankind,
Far less the sons of God; but as our God
Has deign'd to commune with me, and reveal
His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat
Unto a perishable and perishing,
Even on the very *eve* of *perishing*, world,
Cannot be good.

Aza. What! though it were to save?

Noah. Not ye in all your glory can redeem
What he who made you glorious hath condemn'd.
Were your immortal mission safety, 'twould
Be general, not for two, though beautiful;
And beautiful they are, but not the less
Condemn'd.

Japh. Oh, father! say it not.

Noah. Son! son!
If that thou wouldst avoid their doom, forget
That they exist: they soon shall cease to be;
While thou shalt be the sire of a new world,
And better.

Japh. Let me die with *this*, and *them!*

Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a thought, but shalt not; he
Who *can* redeems thee.

Sam. And why him and thee,
More than what he, thy son, prefers to both?

Noah. Ask him who made thee greater than myself
And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears!

Enter RAPHAEL *the Archangel.*

Raph. Spirits!
Whose seat is near the throne,
What do ye here?
Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown,
Now that the hour is near
When earth must be alone?
Return!
Adore and burn
In glorious homage with the elected "seven."
Your place is heaven.

Sam. Raphael!
The first and fairest of the sons of God,
How long hath this been law,
That earth by angels must be left untrod?
Earth! which oft saw
Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod!
The world he loved, and made
For love; and oft have we obey'd
His frequent mission with delighted pinions:
Adoring him in his least works display'd;
Watching this youngest star of his dominions;
And, as the latest birth of his great word,
Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord.
Why is thy brow severe?
And wherefore speak'st thou of destruction near?

(1) [In the original MS. "Michael."—"I return you," says Lord Byron to Mr. M., "the revise. I have softened the part to which Gifford objected, and changed the name of Michael to Raphael, who was an angel of gentler sympathies."—*B. Letters*, July 6. 1822.]

Raph. Had Samiasa and Azaziel been
In their true place, with the angelic choir,
Written in fire
They would have seen
Jehovah's late decree,
And not enquired their Maker's breath of me:
But ignorance must ever be
A part of sin;
And even the spirits' knowledge shall grow less
As they wax proud within;
For Blindness is the first-born of Excess.
When all good angels left the world, ye stay'd,
Stung with strange passions, and debased
By mortal feelings for a mortal maid:
But ye are pardon'd thus far, and replaced
With your pure equals. Hence! away! away!
Or stay,
And lose eternity by that delay!

Aza. And thou! if earth be thus forbidden
In the decree
To us until this moment hidden,
Dost thou not err as we
In being here?

Raph. I came to call ye back to your fit sphere,
In the great name and at the word of God.
Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce less dear
That which I came to do: till now we trod
Together the eternal space; together
Let us still walk the stars. True, earth must die!
Her race, return'd into her womb, must wither,
And much which she inherits: but oh! why

Cannot this earth be made, or be destroy'd,
Without involving ever some vast void
In the immortal ranks? immortal still
In their immeasurable forfeiture.
Our brother Satan fell; his burning will
Rather than longer worship dared endure!
But ye who still are pure!
Seraphs! less mighty than that mightiest one,
Think how he was undone!
And think if tempting man can compensate
For heaven desired too late?
Long have I warr'd,
Long must I war
With him who deem'd it hard
To be created, and to acknowledge him
Who midst the cherubim
Made him as suns to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand dim.
I loved him—beautiful he was: oh heaven!
Save *his* who made, what beauty and what power
Was ever like to Satan's! Would the hour
In which he fell could ever be forgiven!
The wish is impious: but, oh ye!
Yet undestroy'd, be warn'd! Eternity
With him, or with his God, is in your choice:
He hath not tempted you; he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares exempt:
But man hath listen'd to his voice,
And ye to woman's—beautiful she is,
The serpent's voice less subtle than her kiss.
The snake but vanquish'd dust; but she will draw
A second host from heaven, to break heaven's law.

Yet, yet, oh fly!
Ye cannot die;
But they
Shall pass away,
While ye shall fill with shrieks the upper sky
For perishable clay,
Whose memory in your immortality
Shall long outlast the sun which gave them day.
Think how your essence differeth from theirs
In all but suffering! why partake
The agony to which they must be heirs—
Born to be plough'd with years, and sown with cares,
And reap'd by Death, lord of the human soil?
Even had their days been left to toil their path
Through time to dust, unshorten'd by God's wrath,
Still they are Evil's prey and Sorrow's spoil.
Aho. Let them fly!
I hear the voice which says that all must die
Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs died;
And that on high
An ocean is prepared,
While from below
The deep shall rise to meet heaven's overflow.
Few shall be spared,
It seems; and, of that few, the race of Cain
Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.
Sister! since it is so,
And the eternal Lord
In vain would be implored
For the remission of one hour of woe,
Let us resign even what we have adored,
And meet the wave, as we would meet the sword,

If not unmoved, yet undismay'd,
And wailing less for us than those who shall
Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,
And, when the fatal waters are allay'd,
Weep for the myriads who can weep no more.
Fly, seraphs! to your own eternal shore,
Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.
Our portion is to die,
And yours to live for ever:
But which is best, a dead eternity,
Or living, is but known to the great Giver.
Obey him, as we shall obey;
I would not keep this life of mine in clay
An hour beyond his will;
Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace,
For all the mercy which Seth's race
Find still.
Fly!
And as your pinions bear ye back to heaven,
Think that my love still mounts with thee on high,
Samiasa!
And if I look up with a tearless eye,
'Tis that an angel's bride disdains to weep,—
Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!
Anah. And must we die?
And must I lose thee too,
Azaziel?
Oh, my heart! my heart!
Thy prophecies were true!
And yet thou wert so happy too!
The blow, though not unlook'd for, falls as new:
But yet depart!

Ah! why?
Yet let me not retain thee—fly!
My pangs can be but brief; but thine would be
Eternal, if repulsed from heaven for me.
Too much already hast thou deign'd
To one of Adam's race!
Our doom is sorrow: not to us alone,
But to the spirits who have not disdain'd
To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
The first who taught us knowledge hath been hurl'd
From his once archangelic throne
Into some unknown world:
And thou, Azaziel! No—
Thou shalt not suffer woe
For me. Away! nor weep!
Thou canst not weep; but yet
May'st suffer more, not weeping: then forget
Her, whom the surges of the all-strangling deep
Can bring no pang like this. Fly! fly!
Being gone, 'twill be less difficult to die.
Japh. Oh say not so!
Father! and thou, archangel, thou!
Surely celestial mercy lurks below
That pure severe serenity of brow:
Let them not meet this sea without a shore,
Save in our ark, or let me be no more!
Noah. Peace, child of passion, peace!
If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
Do God no wrong!
Live as he wills it—die, when he ordains,
A righteous death, unlike the seed of Cain's.
Cease, or be sorrowful in silence; cease

To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish plaint.
Wouldst thou have God commit a sin for thee?
Such would it be
To alter his intent
For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!
And bear what Adam's race must bear, and can.
Japh. Ay, father! but when they are gone,
And we are all alone,
Floating upon the azure desert, and
The depth beneath us hides our own dear land,
And dearer, silent friends and brethren, all
Buried in its immeasurable breast,
Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall then command?
Can we in desolation's peace have rest?
Oh God! be thou a God, and spare
Yet while 'tis time!
Renew not Adam's fall:
Mankind were then but twain,
But they are numerous now as are the waves
And the tremendous rain,
Whose drops shall be less thick than would their graves,
Were graves permitted to the seed of Cain.
Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of thine's a crime.
Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.
Raph. Seraphs! these mortals speak in passion:
Ye!
Who are, or should be, passionless and pure,
May now return with me.
Sam. It may not be:
We have chosen, and will endure.

Raph. Say'st thou?
Aza. He hath said it, and I say, Amen!
Raph. Again!
Then from this hour,
Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,
And aliens from your God,
Farewell!
Japh. Alas! where shall they dwell?
Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,
Are howling from the mountain's bosom:
There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each blossom:
Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.
Noah. Hark, hark! the sea-birds cry!
In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
And hover round the mountain, where before
Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
Yet dared to soar,
Even when the waters wax'd too fierce to brave.
Soon it shall be their only shore,
And then, no more!
Japh. The sun! the sun!
He riseth, but his better light is gone;
And a black circle, bound
His glaring disk around,
Proclaims earth's last of summer days hath shone!
The clouds return into the hues of night,
Save where their brazen-colour'd edges streak
The verge where brighter morns were wont to break.
Noah. And lo! yon flash of light,
The distant thunder's harbinger, appears!
It cometh! hence, away!

Leave to the elements their evil prey!
Hence to where our all-hallow'd ark uprears
Its safe and wreckless sides!
Japh. Oh, father, stay!
Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides!
Noah. Must we not leave all life to such? Begone!
Japh. Not I.
Noah. Then die
With them!
How darest thou look on that prophetic sky,
And seek to save what all things now condemn,
In overwhelming unison
With just Jehovah's wrath!
Japh. Can rage and justice join in the same path?
Noah. Blasphemer! darest thou murmur even now?
Raph. Patriarch, be still a father! smooth thy brow:
Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink:
He knows not what he says, yet shall not drink
With sobs the salt foam of the swelling waters;
But be, when passion passeth, good as thou,
Nor perish like heaven's children with man's daughters.
Aho. The tempest cometh; heaven and earth [unite
For the annihilation of all life.
Unequal is the strife
Between our strength and the Eternal Might!
Sam. But ours is with thee; we will bear ye far
To some untroubled star,
Where thou and Anah shalt partake our lot:
And if thou dost not weep for thy lost earth,
Our forfeit heaven shall also be forgot.

Anah. Oh! my dear father's tents, my place of birth,
And mountains, land, and woods! when ye are not,
Who shall dry up my tears?
Aza. Thy spirit-lord.
Fear not; though we are shut from heaven,
Yet much is ours, whence we can not be driven.
Raph. Rebel! thy words are wicked, as thy deeds
Shall henceforth be but weak: the flaming sword,
Which chased the first-born out of Paradise,
Still flashes in the angelic hands.
Aza. It cannot slay us: threaten dust with death,
And talk of weapons unto that which bleeds.
What are thy swords in our immortal eyes?
Raph. The moment cometh to approve thy strength;
And learn at length
How vain to war with what thy God commands:
Thy former force was in thy faith.

Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.

Chorus of Mortals.

The heavens and earth are mingling—God! oh God!
What have we done? Yet spare!
Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth their prayer!
The dragon crawls from out his den,
To herd, in terror, innocent with men;
And the birds scream their agony through air.
Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod

Of wrath, and pity thine own world's despair!
Hear not man only but all nature plead! [clay,
Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye wretched sons of
I cannot, must not, aid you. 'Tis decreed!
[*Exit* RAPHAEL.
Japh. Some clouds sweep on as vultures for their prey,
While others, fix'd as rocks, await the word
At which their wrathful vials shall be pour'd.
No azure more shall robe the firmament,
Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death hath risen:
In the sun's place a pale and ghastly glare
Hath wound itself around the dying air. (1)
Aza. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-founded prison,
To which the elements again repair,
To turn it into what it was: beneath
The shelter of these wings thou shalt be safe,
As was the eagle's nestling once within
Its mother's.—Let the coming chaos chafe
With all its elements! Heed not their din!
A brighter world than this, where thou shalt breathe
Ethereal life, will we explore:
These darken'd clouds are not the only skies.
[AZAZIEL *and* SAMIASA *fly off, and disappear with* ANAH *and* AHOLIBAMAH. (2)

(1) [In his description of the deluge, which is a varied and recurring master-piece, — (we hear it foretold, and we see it come,) — Lord Byron appears to us to have had an eye to Poussin's celebrated picture, with the sky hanging like a weight of lead upon the waters, the sun quenched and lurid, the rocks and trees upon them gloomily watching their fate, and a few figures struggling vainly with the overwhelming waves. — JEFFREY.]

(2) [The elopement of spirits with children of dust is an incident that wants the sanction of reason, good taste, popular opinion, history, or tradition. It is only countenanced by the mythology which school-boys learn

Japh. They are gone! They have disappear'd
amidst the roar
Of the forsaken world; and never more,
Whether they live, or die with all earth's life,
Now near its last, can aught restore
Anah unto these eyes. (1)

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from their pantheons, and, when endowed with natural good sense, learn to despise before they cease to be boys; and by the romances, which the good sense of later ages has discarded from their literature, although the *superior* sense of this enlightened age seems willing to restore them to favour. Milton is so far from countenancing any thing so monstrous and inconceivable as sexual love between spiritual and material creatures, that his Adam speaks to Raphael of the passion to which he was too much enthralled by female charms, even where it was properly and naturally placed, as a weakness of which he seems to be half ashamed —

> "Here passion first I felt—
> Commotion strange! In all enjoyments else,
> Superior and unmoved. Here only, weak
> Against the charms of Beauty's powerful glance."

The angel rebukes him for yielding to a subjection unworthy the perfection of his nature, and warns him of the debasement and disgrace in which it might involve him. This produces a question from the man, whether sexual love made no part of the happiness of the blest abode? To whom the angel (with a smile that glowed celestial rosy red, love's proper hue) answered —

> "Let it suffice thee, that thou know'st
> Us happy; and without love no happiness!
> Whatever pure thou in thy body enjoy'st,
> And pure thou wert created, we enjoy
> In eminence."

What Adam says on another occasion, may be applied to these unnatural conjunctions: —

> "Among unequals, what society
> Can sort, what harmony, and true delight!"

In Lord Byron's poem, they are censured by Noah, as improper and unlawful; but this does not lessen the absurdity of supposing them possible. — ANON.]

(1) [The despair of the mortal lovers for the loss of their mortal mistresses is well and pathetically expressed. — JEFFREY.]

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!
What! wilt thou leave us all—all—*all* behind?
While safe amidst the elemental strife,
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark?

A Mother (offering her infant to JAPHET). Oh let this child embark!
I brought him forth in woe,
But thought it joy
To see him to my bosom clinging so.
Why was he born?
What hath he done—
My unwean'd son—
To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn?
What is there in this milk of mine, that death
Should stir all heaven and earth up to destroy
My boy,
And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?
Save him, thou seed of Seth!
Or cursed be—with him who made
Thee and thy race, for which we are betray'd!

Japh. Peace! 'tis no hour for curses, but for prayer!

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!
And where
Shall prayer ascend,
When the swoln clouds unto the mountains bend
And burst,
And gushing oceans every barrier rend,
Until the very deserts know no thirst?
Accursed

Be he who made thee and thy sire!
We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
But as we know the worst,
Why should our hymn be raised, our knees be bent
Before the implacable Omnipotent,
Since we must fall the same?
If he hath made earth, let it be his shame,
To make a world for torture.—Lo! they come,
The loathsome waters, in their rage!
And with their roar make wholesome nature dumb!
The forest's trees (coeval with the hour
When Paradise upsprung,
Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her dower,
Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),
So massy, vast, yet green in their old age,
Are overtopp'd,
Their summer blossoms by the surges lopp'd,
Which rise, and rise, and rise.
Vainly we look up to the lowering skies—
They meet the seas,
And shut out God from our beseeching eyes.
Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine ease
In thine allotted ocean-tent;
And view, all floating o'er the element,
The corpses of the world of thy young days:
Then to Jehovah raise
Thy song of praise!
A Mortal. Blessed are the dead
Who die in the Lord!
And though the waters be o'er earth outspread,
Yet, as *his* word,
Be the decree adored!

He gave me life—he taketh but
The breath which is his own:
And though these eyes should be for ever shut,
Nor longer this weak voice before his throne
Be heard in supplicating tone,
Still blessed be the Lord,
For what is past,
For that which is:
For all are his,
From first to last—
Time—space—eternity—life—death—
The vast known and immeasurable unknown.
He made, and can unmake;
And shall *I*, for a little gasp of breath,
Blaspheme and groan?
No; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
Nor quiver, though the universe may quake!

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly?
Not to the mountains high;
For now their torrents rush, with double roar,
To meet the ocean, which, advancing still,
Already grasps each drowning hill,
Nor leaves an unsearch'd cave.

Enter a Woman.

Woman. Oh, save me, save!
Our valley is no more:
My father and my father's tent,
My brethren and my brethren's herds,
The pleasant trees that o'er our noonday bent

And sent forth evening songs from sweetest birds,
The little rivulet which freshen'd all
Our pastures green,
No more are to be seen.
When to the mountain cliff I climb'd this morn,
I turn'd to bless the spot,
And not a leaf appear'd about to fall;—
And now they are not!—
Why was I born?

Japh. To die! in youth to die;
And happier in that doom,
Than to behold the universal tomb
Which I
Am thus condemn'd to weep above in vain.
Why, when all perish, why must I remain? (1)

[*The waters rise: Men fly in every direction; many are overtaken by the waves; the Chorus of Mortals disperses in search of safety up the mountains: Japhet remains upon a rock, while the Ark floats towards him in the distance.*

(1) [This poem, or rather first part of a poem, for so it is stated to be, carries with it the peculiar impress of the writer's genius. It displays great vigour, and even a severity of style, throughout; which is another proof, if proof were needed, that elevation of writing is to be obtained only by a rigid regard to simplicity. It may be perused without shocking the feelings of the sensitive, or furnishing an object for the discriminating morality of the Lord Chancellor. Lord Byron has evidently endeavoured to sustain the interest of this poem, by depicting natural but deep drawn thoughts, in all their freshness and intensity, with as little fictitious aid as possible. Nothing is circumlocutory: there is no going about and about to enter at length upon his object, but he impetuously rushes into it at once. All over the poem there is a gloom cast suitable to the subject: an ominous fearful hue, like that which Poussin has flung over his inimitable picture of the Deluge. We see much evil, but we dread more. All is out of earthly keeping, as the events of the time are out of the course of nature.

Man's wickedness, the perturbed creation, fear-struck mortals, demons passing to and fro in the earth, an overshadowing solemnity, and unearthly loves, form together the materials. That it has faults is obvious: prosaic passages, and too much tedious soliloquising: but there is the vigour and force of Byron to fling into the scale against these: there is much of the sublime in description, and the beautiful in poetry. Prejudice, or ignorance, or both, may condemn it; but, while true poetical feeling exists amongst us, it will be pronounced not unworthy of its distinguished author. — CAMPBELL.

It appears that this is but the first part of a poem; but it is likewise a poem, and a fine one too, within itself. We confess that we see little or nothing objectionable in it, either as to theological orthodoxy, or general human feeling. It is solemn, lofty, fearful, wild, tumultuous, and shadowed all over with the darkness of a dreadful disaster. Of the angels who love the daughters of men we see little, and know less — and not too much of the love and passion of the fair lost mortals. The inconsolable despair preceding and accompanying an incomprehensible catastrophe pervades the whole composition; and its expression is made sublime by the noble strain of poetry in which it is said or sung. Sometimes there is heaviness — dulness — as if it were pressed in on purpose; intended, perhaps, to denote the occasional stupefaction, drowsiness, and torpidity of soul produced by the impending destruction upon the latest of the Antediluvians. But, on the whole, it is not unworthy of Lord Byron. — WILSON.

Lord Byron's "Mystery," with whatever crudeness and defects it is chargeable, certainly has more poetry and music in it than any of his dramatic writings since "Manfred;" and has also the peculiar merit of throwing us back, in a great degree, to the strange and preternatural time of which it professes to treat. It is truly, and in every sense of the word, a meeting of "Heaven and Earth;" angels are seen ascending and descending, and the windows of the sky are opened to deluge the face of nature. We have an impassioned picture of the strong and devoted attachment inspired into the daughters of men by angel forms, and have placed before us the emphatic picture of "woman wailing for her demon lover." There is a like conflict of the passions as of the elements — all wild, chaotic, uncontrollable, fatal; but there is a discordant harmony in all this — a keeping in the colouring and the time. In handling the unpolished page, we look upon the world before the Flood, and gaze upon a doubtful blank, with only a few straggling figures, part human and part divine; while, in the expression of the former, we read the fancies, ethereal and lawless, that lifted the eye of beauty to the skies, and, in the latter, the human passions that "drew angels down to earth." — JEFFREY.

According to that vague and mysterious conception of grandeur which religious or poetic minds associate with the antediluvian ages of the world, "there were giants in those days:" the face of nature, the animal and vegetable productions, the stature, the longevity, the passions of men,

were of a vast and majestic growth, unknown in the later and more feeble days of our ordinary world. Hence, from a poet who throws himself back into those times, we make the unreasonable demand, that he should keep the scenes and persons whom he introduces to our notice sufficiently allied to our common sympathies to excite our interest; while, at the same time, they must appear as almost belonging to another earth, and a different race of beings. We imperiously require that degree of reality, without which no poetry can become lastingly popular: yet that reality must be far removed from all our ordinary notions; the region visited by angels must be formed of the same elements, yet possess a totally distinct character from that which we inhabit: the sons and daughters of men, who enjoyed familiar intercourse with a higher race of beings, while we are to feel for them as akin to ourselves, must partake in some degree of the unearthly nature of their celestial visitants. To this at once real and unreal world, among this human yet at the same time almost preterhuman race, we must be transported by the imagination of the poet; and the slightest incongruity, the most insignificant vulgarism, or modernism, or even too great similarity to the ordinary features of nature, breaks the charm at once, and destroys the *character* of the picture, as a faithful representation of the primeval earth, and the mighty race which nature bore while yet in her prime of youth. Among all the wonderful excellences of Milton, nothing surpasses the pure and undisturbed idealism with which he has drawn our first parents, so completely human as to excite our most ardent sympathies, yet so far distinct from the common race of men as manifestly to belong to a higher and uncorrupted state of being. In like manner, his Paradise is formed of the universal productions of nature — the flowers, the fruits, the trees, the waters, the cool breezes, the soft and sunny slopes, the majestic hills that skirt the scene; yet the whole is of an earlier, a more prolific, a more luxuriant vegetation · it fully comes up to our notion of what the earth might have been before it was "cursed of its Creator." This is the more remarkable, as Milton himself sometimes destroys, or at least mars, the general effect of his picture, by the introduction of incongruous thoughts or images. It has, not without justice, been said, that sometimes

"God the Father turns a school divine;"

and it is impossible, now and then, not to regret the intrusion of the religious controversies of modern days. The poet's passions are, on occasions, too strong for his imagination, drag him down to earth, and, for the sake of some ill-timed allusion to some of those circumstances, which had taken possession of his mighty mind, he runs the hazard of breaking the solemn enchantment with which he has spell-bound our captive senses. Perhaps, of later writers, Lord Byron alone has caught the true tone, in his short drama called "Heaven and Earth." Here, notwithstanding that we cannot but admit the great and manifold delinquencies against correct taste, particularly some perfectly ludicrous metrical whimsies, yet all is in keeping — all is strange, poetic, oriental; the lyric abruptness, the prodigal accumulation of images in one part, and the rude simplicity in others

— above all, the general tone of description as to natural objects, and of language and feeling in the scarcely mortal beings which come forth upon the scene, seem to throw us upward into the age of men before their lives were shortened to the narrow span of three-score years and ten, and when all that walked the earth were not born of woman. — MILMAN.

From the "Loves of the Angels," we turn to a "strain of higher mood;" with feelings much like those which would arise on leaving the contemplation of a "Holy Family" by Carlo Dolce, to behold the "Last Judgment" of Michel Angelo. The Mystery of "Heaven and Earth" is conceived in the best style of the greatest masters of poetry and painting. It is not unworthy of Dante, and of the mighty artist to whom we have alluded. As a picture of the last deluge, it is incomparably grand and awful. The characters, too, are invested with great dignity and grace. Nothing can be more imposing and fascinating than the haughty, and imperious, and passionate beauty of the daughter of Cain; nor any thing more venerable than the mild but inflexible dignity of the patriarch Noah. We trust that no one will be found with feelings so obtuse, with taste so perverted, or with malignity so undisguised, as to mar the beauties of pictures like these, by imputing to their author the cool profession of those sentiments which he exhibits as extorted from perishing mortals, in their last instants of despair and death. Such a poem as this, if read aright, is calculated, by its lofty passion and sublime conceptions, to exalt the mind and to purify the heart beyond the power of many a sober homily. It will remain an imperishable monument of the transcendent talents of its author; whom it has raised, in our estimation, to a higher pitch of pre-eminence than he ever before attained. — M. MAG.]

SARDANAPALUS,

A TRAGEDY. (1)

(1) [On the original MS. Lord Byron has written: — "*Mem.* Ravenna, May 27. 1821. — I began this drama on the 13th of January, 1821; and continued the two first acts very slowly, and by intervals. The three last acts were written since the 13th of May, 1821 (this present month); that is to say, in a fortnight." The following are extracts from Lord B.'s diary and letters: —

"January 13. 1821. Sketched the outline and Dram. Pers. of an intended tragedy of Sardanapalus, which I have for some time meditated. Took the names from Diodorus Siculus, (I know the history of Sardanapalus, and have known it since I was twelve years old,) and read over a passage in the ninth volume of Mitford's Greece, where he rather vindicates

the memory of this last of the Assyrians. Carried Teresa the Italian translation of Grillparzer's Sappho. She quarrelled with me, because I said that love was *not the loftiest* theme for a tragedy; and, having the advantage of her native language, and natural female eloquence, she overcame my fewer arguments. I believe she was right. I must put more love into 'Sardanapalus' than I intended."

"May 25. I have completed four acts. I have made Sardanapalus brave, (though voluptuous, as history represents him,) and also as amiable as my poor powers could render him. I have strictly preserved all the unities hitherto, and mean to continue them in the fifth, if possible; but NOT for *the stage*."

"May 30. By this post I send you the tragedy. You will remark that the unities are all strictly preserved. The scene passes in the same hall always: the time, a summer's night, about nine hours or less; though it begins before sunset, and ends after sunrise. It is not for the stage, any more than the other was intended for it; and I shall take better care this time that they don't get hold on't."

"July 14. I trust that 'Sardanapalus' will not be mistaken for a political play; which was so far from my intention, that I thought of nothing but Asiatic history. My object has been to dramatise, like the Greeks (a *modest* phrase), striking passages of history and mythology. You will find all this very *un*like Shakspeare; and so much the better in one sense, for I look upon him to be the worst of models, though the most extraordinary of writers. It has been my object to be as simple and severe as Alfieri, and I have broken down the poetry as nearly as I could to common language. The hardship is that, in these times, one can neither speak of kings nor queens without suspicion of politics or personalities. I intended neither.

"July 22. Print away, and publish. I think they must own that I have more styles than one. 'Sardanapalus' is, however, almost a comic character: but, for that matter, so is Richard the Third. Mind the *unities*, which are my great object of research. I am glad Gifford likes it: as for the million, you see I have carefully consulted any thing but the taste of the day for extravagant 'coups de théâtre.'"

Sardanapalus was published in December, 1821, and was received with very great approbation. (1) — E.]

(1) The following is an extract from The Life of Dr. Parr: — "In the course of the evening the Doctor cried out — 'Have you read Sardanapalus?' — 'Yes, Sir?' — 'Right; and you couldn't sleep a wink after it?' — 'No.' — 'Right, right — now don't say a word more about it to-night.' — The memory of that fine poem seemed to act like a spell of horrible fascination upon him."

TO

THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE

A STRANGER

PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE

OF A LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD,

THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,

WHO HAS CREATED

THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY,

AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.

THE UNWORTHY PRODUCTION

WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO HIM

IS ENTITLED

SARDANAPALUS. (1)

(1) ["Well knowing myself and my labours, in my old age, I could not but reflect with gratitude and diffidence on the expressions contained in this dedication, nor interpret them but as the generous tribute of a superior genius, no less original in the choice than inexhaustible in the materials of his subjects." — GOETHE.]

PREFACE.

In publishing the following Tragedies (1) I have only to repeat, that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage. On the attempt made by the Managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed. With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the following compositions the reader is referred to the Notes.

The Author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach, the "unities;" conceiving that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilised parts of it. But "nous avons changé tout cela," and are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that any thing he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his

(1) ["Sardanapalus" originally appeared in the same volume with "The Foscari" and "Cain."—E.]

regular, or even irregular predecessors: he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect, — and not in the art. (1)

(1) ["In this preface," (says Mr. Jeffrey) "Lord Byron renews his protest against looking upon any of his plays as having been composed 'with the most remote view to the stage;' and, at the same time, testifies in behalf of the unities, as essential to the existence of the drama — according to what 'was, till lately, the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilised parts of it.' We do not think these opinions very consistent; and we think that neither of them could possibly find favour with a person whose genius had a truly dramatic character. We should as soon expect an orator to compose a speech altogether unfit to be spoken. A drama is not merely a dialogue, but *an action*; and necessarily supposes that something is to pass before the eyes of assembled spectators. Whatever is peculiar to its written part, should derive its peculiarity from this consideration. Its style should be an accompaniment to action, and should be calculated to excite the emotions, and keep alive the attention, of gazing multitudes. If an author does not bear this continually in his mind, and does not write in the ideal presence of an eager and diversified assemblage, he may be a poet perhaps, but assuredly he will never be a dramatist. If Lord Byron really does not wish to impregnate his elaborate scenes with the living part of the drama — if he has no hankering after stage-effect — if he is not haunted with the visible presentiment of the persons he has created — if, in setting down a vehement invective, he does not fancy the tone in which Mr. Kean would deliver it, and anticipate the long applauses of the pit, then he may be sure that neither his feelings nor his genius are in unison with the stage at all. Why, then, should he affect the form, without the power of tragedy? Didactic reasoning and eloquent description will not compensate, in a play, for a dearth of dramatic spirit and invention: and, besides, sterling sense and poetry, as such, ought to stand by themselves, without the unmeaning mockery of a *dramatis personæ*. As to Lord Byron pretending to set up the unities at this time of day, as 'the law of literature throughout the world,' it is mere caprice and contradiction. He, if ever man was, is *a law to himself* — 'a chartered libertine;' — and now, when he is tired of this unbridled license, he wants to do penance within the unities! English dramatic poetry soars above the unities, just as the imagination does. The only pretence for insisting on them is, that we suppose the stage itself to be, actually and really, the very spot on which a given action is performed; and, if so, this space cannot be removed to another.

But the supposition is manifestly quite contrary to truth and experience." *Edin. Rev.*, vol. xxxvi.

The reader may be pleased to compare the above with the following passage from Dr. Johnson: —

"Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide and useless to enquire. We may reasonably suppose, that when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and critics; and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire: —

> —'Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
> Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
> Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.'

Yet, when I speak thus slightly of dramatic rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for far better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my enquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama; that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown rather what is possible than what is necessary. He that without diminution of any other excellence shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature and instruct life." — *Preface to Shakspeare.*]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SARDANAPALUS, *King of Nineveh and Assyria, &c.*
ARBACES, *the Mede who aspired to the Throne.*
BELESES, *a Chaldean and Soothsayer.*
SALEMENES, *the King's Brother-in-law.*
ALTADA, *an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.*
PANIA.
ZAMES.
SFERO.
BALEA.

WOMEN.

ZARINA, *the Queen.*
MYRRHA, *an Ionian female Slave, and the Favourite of* SARDANAPALUS.
Women composing the Harem of SARDANAPALUS, *Guards, Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, &c. &c.*

Scene—a Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh.

IN this tragedy it has been my intention to follow the account of Diodorus Siculus; (1) reducing it, however, to such dramatic regularity as I best could, and trying to approach the unities. I therefore suppose the rebellion to explode and succeed in one day by a sudden conspiracy, instead of the long war of the history.

(1) ["This prince surpassed all his predecessors in effeminacy, luxury, and cowardice. He never went out of his palace, but spent all his time among a company of women, dressed and painted like them, and employed like them at the distaff. He placed all his happiness and glory in the possession of immense treasures, in feasting and rioting, and indulging himself in all the most infamous and criminal pleasures. He ordered two verses to be put upon his tomb, signifying that he carried away with him all he had eaten, and all the pleasures he had enjoyed, but left every thing else behind him: —

Κεῖν' ἔχω ὅσα' ἔφαγον καὶ ἐφύβρισα, καὶ μετ' ἔρωτος
Τέρψιν' ἔπαθον, τὰ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ὄλβια πάντα λέλειπται —

an epitaph, says Aristotle, *fit for a hog*. Arbaces, governor of Media, having found means to get into the palace, and having with his own eyes seen Sardanapalus in the midst of his infamous seraglio, enraged at such a spectacle, and not able to endure that so many brave men should be subject to a prince more soft and effeminate than the women themselves, immediately formed a conspiracy against him. Belcses, governor of Babylon, and several others, entered into it. On the first rumour of this revolt, the king hid himself in the inmost part of his palace. Being afterwards obliged to take the field with some forces which he had assembled, he at first gained three successive victories over the enemy, but was afterwards overcome, and pursued to the gates of Nineveh; wherein he shut himself, in hopes the rebels would never be able to take a city so well fortified, and stored with provisions for a considerable time. The siege proved indeed of very great length. It had been declared by an ancient oracle that Nineveh could never be taken, unless the river became an enemy to the city. These words buoyed up Sardanapalus, because he looked upon the thing as impossible. But when he saw that the Tigris, by a violent inundation, had thrown down twenty stadia (two miles and a half) of the city wall, and by that means opened a passage to the enemy, he understood the meaning of the oracle, and thought himself lost. He resolved, however, to die in such a manner as, according to his opinion, should cover the infamy of his scandalous and effeminate life. He ordered a pile of wood to be made in his palace, and setting fire to it burnt himself, his eunuchs, his women, and his treasures." — DIOD. SIC. l. ii. p. 109.]

SARDANAPALUS.[1]

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Palace.

Salemenes (*solus*). He hath wrong'd his queen, but still he is her lord;
He hath wrong'd my sister, still he is my brother;
He hath wrong'd his people, still he is their sovereign,
And I must be his friend as well as subject:

(1) [Sardanapalus is, beyond all doubt, a work of great beauty and power; and though the heroine has many traits in common with the Medoras and Gulnares of Lord Byron's undramatic poetry, the hero must be allowed to be a new character in his hands. He has, indeed, the scorn of war, and glory, and priestcraft, and regular morality, which distinguishes the rest of his lordship's favourites; but he has no misanthropy, and very little pride — and may be regarded, on the whole, as one of the most truly good-humoured, amiable, and respectable voluptuaries to whom we have ever been presented. In this conception of his character, the author has very wisely followed nature and fancy rather than history. *His* Sardanapalus is not an effeminate, worn-out debauchee, with shattered nerves and exhausted senses, the slave of indolence and vicious habits; but a sanguine votary of pleasure, a princely epicure, indulging, revelling in boundless luxury while he can, but with a soul so inured to voluptuousness, so saturated with delights, that pain and danger, when they come uncalled for, give him neither concern nor dread; and he goes forth from the banquet to the battle, as to a dance or measure, attired by the Graces, and with youth, joy, and love for his guides. He dallies with Bellona as her bridegroom — for his sport and pastime; and the spear or fan, the shield or shining mirror, become his hands equally well. He enjoys life,

He must not perish thus. I will not see
The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis
Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred years
Of empire ending like a shepherd's tale;
He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
There is a careless courage which corruption
Has not all quench'd, and latent energies,
Repress'd by circumstance, but not destroy'd —
Steep'd, but not drown'd, in deep voluptuousness.
If born a peasant, he had been a man
To have reach'd an empire: to an empire born,
He will bequeath none; nothing but a name,
Which his sons will not prize in heritage: —
Yet, not all lost, even yet he may redeem
His sloth and shame, by only being that
Which he should be, as easily as the thing
He should not be and is. Were it less toil

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in short, and triumphs in death; and whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, his soul smiles out superior to evil. — JEFFREY.

The Sardanapalus of Lord Byron is pretty nearly such a person as the Sardanapalus of history may be supposed to have been. Young, thoughtless, spoiled by flattery and unbounded self-indulgence, but with a temper naturally amiable, and abilities of a superior order, he affects to undervalue the sanguinary renown of his ancestors as an excuse for inattention to the most necessary duties of his rank; and flatters himself, while he is indulging his own sloth, that he is making his people happy. Yet, even in his fondness for pleasure, there lurks a love of contradiction. Of the whole picture, selfishness is the prevailing feature — selfishness admirably drawn indeed; apologised for by every palliating circumstance of education and habit, and clothed in the brightest colours of which it is susceptible from youth, talents, and placability. But it is selfishness still; and we should have been tempted to quarrel with the art which made vice and frivolity thus amiable, if Lord Byron had not at the same time pointed out with much skill the bitterness and weariness of spirit which inevitably wait on such a character; and if he had not given a fine contrast to the picture in the accompanying portraits of Salemenes and of Myrrha. — REGINALD HEBER.]

To sway his nations than consume his life?
To head an army than to rule a harem?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul, (1)
And saps his goodly strength, in toils which yield not
Health like the chase, nor glory like the war —
He must be roused. Alas! there is no sound
[*Sound of soft music heard from within.*
To rouse him short of thunder. Hark! the lute,
The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
Of lulling instruments, the softening voices
Of women, and of beings less than women,
Must chime in to the echo of his revel,
While the great king of all we know of earth
Lolls crown'd with roses, and his diadem
Lies negligently by to be caught up
By the first manly hand which dares to snatch it.
Lo, where they come! already I perceive
The reeking odours of the perfumed trains,
And see the bright gems of the glittering girls, (2)
At once his chorus and his council, flash
Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
As femininely garb'd, and scarce less female,
The grandson of Semiramis, the man-queen. —
He comes! Shall I await him? yes, and front him,
And tell him what all good men tell each other,
Speaking of him and his. They come, the slaves,
Led by the monarch subject to his slaves. (3)

(1) [MS. — "He sweats in dreary, dulled effeminacy."]

(2) [MS. — "And see the gewgaws of the glittering girls."]

(3) [Salemenes is the direct opposite to selfishness; and the character, though slightly sketched, displays little less ability than that of Sardanapalus. He is a stern, loyal, plain-spoken soldier and subject; clear-sighted, just and honourable in his ultimate views, though not more punctilious

SCENE II.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *effeminately dressed, his Head crowned with Flowers, and his Robe negligently flowing, attended by a Train of Women and young Slaves.*

Sar. (*speaking to some of his attendants*). Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
Be garlanded, and lit, and furnish'd forth
For an especial banquet; at the hour
Of midnight we will sup there: see nought wanting,
And bid the galley be prepared. There is
A cooling breeze which crisps the broad clear river:
We will embark anon. Fair nymphs, who deign
To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
We'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
When we shall gather like the stars above us,
And you will form a heaven as bright as theirs;

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about the means of obtaining them than might be expected from a respectable satrap of ancient Nineveh, or a respectable vizier of the modern Turkish empire. To his king, in spite of personal neglect and family injuries, he is, throughout, pertinaciously attached and punctiliously faithful. To the king's rebels he is inclined to be severe, bloody, and even treacherous; an imperfection, however, in his character, to want which would, in his situation, be almost unnatural, and which is skilfully introduced as a contrast to the instinctive perception of virtue and honour which flashes out from the indolence of his master. Of the satrap, however, the faults as well as the virtues are alike the offspring of disinterested loyalty and patriotism. It is for his country and king that he is patient of injury; for them he is valiant; for them cruel. He has no ambition of personal power, no thirst of individual fame. In battle and in victory, "Assyria!" is his only war-cry. When he sends off the queen and princes, he is less anxious for his nephews and sister than for the preservation of the line of Nimrod; and, in his last moments, it is the supposed flight of his sovereign which alone distresses and overcomes him. — REGINALD HEBER.]

Till then, let each be mistress of her time,
And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha, (1) choose,
Wilt thou along with them or me?

Myr. My lord ——

Sar. My lord, my life! why answerest thou so coldly?
It is the curse of kings to be so answer'd. [thou
Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine —say, wouldst
Accompany our guests, or charm away
The moments from me?

Myr. The king's choice is mine.(2)

Sar. I pray thee say not so: my chiefest joy
Is to contribute to thine every wish.
I do not dare to breathe my own desire,
Lest it should clash with thine; for thou art still
Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for others.(3)

(1) "The Ionian name had been still more comprehensive, having included the Achaians and the Bœotians, who, together with those to whom it was afterwards confined, would make nearly the whole of the Greek nation; and among the orientals it was always the general name for the Greeks." — MITFORD'S *Greece*, vol. i. p. 199.

(2) [The chief charm and vivifying angel of the piece is Myrrha, the Greek slave of Sardanapalus — a beautiful, heroic, devoted, and etherial being — in love with the generous and infatuated monarch — ashamed of loving a barbarian — and using all her influence over him to ennoble as well as to adorn his existence, and to arm him against the terrors of his close. Her voluptuousness is that of the heart — her heroism of the affections. If the part she takes in the dialogue be sometimes too subdued and submissive for the lofty daring of her character, it is still such as might become a Greek slave — a lovely Ionian girl, in whom the love of liberty and the scorn of death were tempered by the consciousness of what she regarded as a degrading passion, and an inward sense of fitness and decorum with reference to her condition. — JEFFREY.]

(3) [Myrrha is a female Salemenes, in whom, with admirable skill, attachment to the individual Sardanapalus is substituted for the gallant soldier's loyalty to the descendant of kings; and whose energy of expostulation, no less than the natural high tone of her talents, her courage, and her Grecian pride, is softened into a subdued and winning tenderness by

Myr. I would remain: I have no happiness
Save in beholding thine; yet ——
Sar. Yet! what YET?
Thy own sweet will shall be the only barrier
Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.
Myr. I think the present is the wonted hour
Of council; it were better I retire.
Sal. (*comes forward and says*) The Ionian slave says well: let her retire.
Sar. Who answers? How now, brother?
Sal. The *queen*'s brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal lord.
Sar. (*addressing his train*). As I have said, let all dispose their hours
Till midnight, when again we pray your presence.
[*The court retiring.*
(*To* MYRRHA,(1) *who is going*) Myrrha! I thought *thou* wouldst remain.
Myr. Great king,
Thou didst not say so.
Sar. But *thou* lookedst it:
I know each glance of those Ionic eyes,(3)
Which said thou wouldst not leave me.

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the constant and painful recollection of her abasement as a slave in the royal harem; and still more by the lowliness of perfect womanly love in the presence of and towards the object of her passion. No character can be drawn more natural than hers; few ever have been drawn more touching and amiable. Of course she is not, nor could be, a Jewish or a Christian heroine; but she is a model of Grecian piety and nobility of spirit, and she is one whom a purer faith would have raised to the level of a Rebecca or a Miriam. — REGINALD HEBER.]

(1) [In the original draught, "*Byblis*." — E.]

(2) [MS. — "I know each glance of those deep Greek-soul'd eyes." — E.]

Myr. Sire! your brother——
Sal. His *consort*'s brother, minion of Ionia!
How darest *thou* name *me* and not blush?
Sar. Not blush!
Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make her crimson
Like to the dying day on Caucasus,
Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows,
And then reproach her with thine own cold blindness,
Which will not see it. What, in tears, my Myrrha?
Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than one,
And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.
Sar. Cursed be he who caused those tears to flow!
Sal. Curse not thyself— millions do that already.
Sar. Thou dost forget thee: make me not remember
I am a monarch.
Sal. Would thou couldst!
Myr. My sovereign,
I pray, and thou, too, prince, permit my absence.
Sar. Since it must be so, and this churl has check'd
Thy gentle spirit, go; but recollect
That we must forthwith meet: I had rather lose
An empire than thy presence. [*Exit* MYRRHA.
Sal. It may be,
Thou wilt lose both, and both for ever!
Sar. Brother,
I can at least command myself, who listen

To language such as this: yet urge me not
Beyond my easy nature.
Sal. 'Tis beyond
That easy, far too easy, idle nature, [thee!
Which I would urge thee. O that I could rouse
Though 'twere against myself.
Sar. By the god Baal!
The man would make me tyrant.
Sal. So thou art.
Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice —
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury —
The negligence — the apathy — the evils
Of sensual sloth — produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Corrupt no less than they oppress, and sap
In the same moment all thy pageant power
And those who should sustain it; so that whether
A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
Distract within, both will alike prove fatal:
The first thy subjects have no heart to conquer;
The last they rather would assist than vanquish.
Sar. Why, what makes thee the mouth-piece of the people?
Sal. Forgiveness of the queen, my sister's wrongs;
A natural love unto my infant nephews;
Faith to the king, a faith he may need shortly,
In more than words; respect for Nimrod's line;
Also, another thing thou knowest not.

Sar. What's that?
Sal. To thee an unknown word.
Sar. Yet speak it;
I love to learn.
Sal. Virtue.
Sar. Not know the word!
Never was word yet rung so in my ears —
Worse than the rabble's shout, or splitting trumpet:
I've heard thy sister talk of nothing else.
Sar. To change the irksome theme, then, hear of
Sar. From whom? [vice.
Sal. Even from the winds, if thou couldst listen
Unto the echoes of the nation's voice.
Sar. Come, I'm indulgent, as thou knowest, patient, [thee?
As thou hast often proved — speak out, what moves
Sal. Thy peril.
Sar. Say on.
Sal. Thus, then: all the nations,
For they are many, whom thy father left
In heritage, are loud in wrath against thee.
Sar. 'Gainst *me!* What would the slaves?
Sal. A king.
Sar. And what
Am I then?
Sal. In their eyes a nothing; but
In mine a man who might be something still.
Sar. The railing drunkards! why, what would they have?
Have they not peace and plenty?
Sal. Of the first

More than is glorious; of the last, far less
Than the king recks of.
Sar. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps, who provide no better?
Sal. And somewhat in the monarch who ne'er looks
Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs
Beyond them, 'tis but to some mountain palace,
Till summer heats wear down. O glorious Baal!
Who built up this vast empire, and wert made
A god, or at the least shinest like a god
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er beheld
As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as hero,
Won with thy blood, and toil, and time, and peril!
For what? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion.
Sar. I understand thee—thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read—the restless slaves (1)
Deserve that I should curse them with their wishes,
And lead them forth to glory.
Sal. Wherefore not?
Semiramis—a woman only—led
These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.
Sar. 'Tis most true. And *how* return'd?
Sal. Why, like a *man*—a hero; baffled, but
Not vanquish'd. With but twenty guards, she made
Good her retreat to Bactria.

(1) [MS. —— "I have a mind
To curse the restless slaves with their own wishes."]

Sar. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?
Sal. Our annals say not.
Sar. Then I will say for them—
That she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men—the fiercer of the three,
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this* glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.
Sal. All warlike spirits have not the same fate.
Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she fail'd in India,
Brought Persia, Media, Bactria, to the realm
Which she once sway'd—and thou *might'st* sway.
Sar. I *sway* them—
She but subdued them.
Sal. It may be ere long
That they will need her sword more than your sceptre.
Sar. There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I've heard my Greek girls speak of such—they say
He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,
Who conquer'd this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquish'd.
Sal. I have heard of such a man; and thou perceiv'st
That he is deem'd a god for what he did.
Sar. And in his godship I will honour him—
Not much as man. What, ho! my cupbearer!
Sal. What means the king?

Sar. To worship your new god
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.

Enter Cupbearer.

Sar. (*addressing the Cupbearer*). Bring me the golden goblet thick with gems,
Which bears the name of Nimrod's chalice. Hence,
Fill full, and bear it quickly. [*Exit Cupbearer.*

Sal. Is this moment
A fitting one for the resumption of
Thy yet unslept-off revels?

Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.

Sar. (*taking the cup from him*). Noble kinsman,
If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this Bacchus
Conquer'd the whole of India, did he not?

Sal. He did, and thence was deem'd a deity.(1)

Sar. Not so:—of all his conquests a few columns,
Which may be his, and might be mine, if I
Thought them worth purchase and conveyance, are
The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he broke.
But here, here in this goblet is his title
To immortality—the immortal grape
From which he first express'd the soul, and gave
To gladden that of man, as some atonement
For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have been
A mortal still in name as in his grave;

[(1) MS. — "He did, and thence was deem'd a god in story."]

And, like my ancestor Semiramis,
A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
Here's that which deified him—let it now
Humanise thee; my surly, chiding brother,
Pledge me to the Greek god!

Sal. For all thy realms
I would not so blaspheme our country's creed.

Sar. That is to say, thou thinkest him a hero,
That he shed blood by oceans; and no god,
Because he turn'd a fruit to an enchantment,
Which cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires
The young, makes weariness forget his toil,
And fear her danger; opens a new world [thee
When this, the present, palls. Well, then *I* pledge
And *him* as a true man, who did his utmost
In good or evil to surprise mankind. [*Drinks.*

Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this hour?

Sar. And if I did, 'twere better than a trophy,
Being bought without a tear. But that is not
My present purpose: since thou wilt not pledge me,
Continue what thou pleasest.
(*To the Cupbearer*). Boy, retire.
[*Exit Cupbearer.*

Sal. I would but have recall'd thee from thy dream;
Better by me awaken'd than rebellion.

Sar. Who should rebel? or why? what cause? pretext?
I am the lawful king, descended from
A race of kings who knew no predecessors.
What have I done to thee, or to the people,
That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up against me?

Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I speak not.

Sar. But
Thou think'st that I have wrong'd the queen: is't not
Sal. Think! Thou hast wrong'd her! (1) [so?
Sar. Patience, prince, and hear me.
She has all power and splendour of her station,
Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
I married her as monarchs wed—for state,
And loved her as most husbands love their wives.
If she or thou supposedst I could link me
Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor mankind.
Sal. I pray thee, change the theme: my blood disdains
Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord!
Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
The queen is silent.
Sar. And why not her brother?
Sal. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
Which he who long neglects not long will govern.
Sar. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves! they murmur
Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges;
Nor decimated them with savage laws,

(1) [In many parts of this play, it strikes me that Lord Byron has more in his eye the case of a sinful Christian that has but one wife, and a sly business or so which she and her kin do not approve of, than a bearded Oriental, like Sardanapalus, with three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines. — Hogg.]

Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
Or Babylonian walls.
Sal. Yet these are trophies
More worthy of a people and their prince
Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
And lavish'd treasures, and contemned virtues.
Sar. Or for my trophies I have founded cities:
There's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
In one day—what could that blood-loving beldame,
My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
Do more, except destroy them?
Sal. 'Tis most true;
I own thy merit in those founded cities,
Built for a whim, recorded with a verse
Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.
Sar. Shame me! By Baal, the cities, though well built,
Are not more goodly than the verse! Say what
Thou wilt 'gainst me, my mode of life or rule,
But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief record.
Why, those few lines contain the history
Of all things human: hear—"Sardanapalus,
The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
Eat, drink, and love; the rest's not worth a fillip."(1)

(1) "For this expedition he took only a small chosen body of the phalanx, but all his light troops. In the first day's march he reached Anchialus, a town said to have been founded by the king of Assyria, Sardanapalus. The fortifications, in their magnitude and extent, still in Arrian's time, bore the character of greatness, which the Assyrians appear singularly to have affected in works of the kind. A monument representing Sardanapalus was found there, warranted by an inscription in Assyrian characters, of course in the old Assyrian language, which the Greeks, whether well or ill, interpreted thus: 'Sardanapalus, son of Anacyn-

Sal. A worthy moral, and
For a king to put up before h
Sar. Oh, thou wouldst hav
edicts—
" Obey the king—contribute
Recruit his phalanx—spill yo
Fall down and worship, or get
Or thus—" Sardanapalus on
Slew fifty thousand of his ene
These are their sepulchres, an
I leave such things to conquer
For me, if I can make my sub
The weight of human misery

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daraxes, in one day founded Anchialus and
other human joys are not worth a fillip.'
exact (for Arrian says it was not quite so),
been to invite to civil order a people dispose
recommend immoderate luxury, may perh
What, indeed, could be the object of a king of Assyria in founding such towns in a country so distant from his capital, and so divided from it by an immense extent of sandy deserts and lofty mountains, and, still more, how the inhabitants could be at once in circumstances to abandon themselves to the intemperate joys which their prince has been supposed to have recommended, is not obvious: but it may deserve observation that, in that line of coast, the southern of Lesser Asia, ruins of cities, evidently of an age after Alexander, yet barely named in history, at this day astonish the adventurous traveller by their magnificence and elegance. Amid the desolation which, under a singularly barbarian government, has for so many centuries been daily spreading in the finest countries of the globe, whether more from soil and climate, or from opportunities for commerce, extraordinary means must have been found for communities to flourish there; whence it may seem that the measures of Sardanapalus were directed by juster views than have been commonly ascribed to him: but that monarch having been the last of a dynasty, ended by a revolution, obloquy on his memory would follow of course from the policy of his successors and their partisans. The inconsistency of traditions concerning Sardanapalus is striking in Diodorus's account of him." — MITFORD'S *Greece*, vol. ix. p. 311.

Ungroaning to the tomb: I take no license
Which I deny to them. We all are men.
Sal. Thy sires have been revered as gods—
Sar. In dust
And death, where they are neither gods nor men.
Talk not of such to me! the worms are gods;
At least they banqueted upon your gods,
And died for lack of farther nutriment.
Those gods were merely men; look to their issue—
I feel a thousand mortal things about me,
But nothing godlike,—unless it may be
The thing which you condemn, a disposition
To love and to be merciful, to pardon
The follies of my species, and (that's human)
To be indulgent to my own.
Sal. Alas!
The doom of Nineveh is seal'd.—Woe—woe
To the unrivall'd city!
Sar. What dost dread!
Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes: in a few hours
The tempest may break out which overwhelms thee,
And thine and mine; and in another day
What *is* shall be the past of Belus' race.
Sar. What must we dread?
Sal. Ambitious treachery,
Which has environ'd thee with snares; but yet
There is resource: empower me with thy signet
To quell the machinations, and I lay
The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.
Sar. The heads—how many?
Sal. Must I stay to number

When even thine own's in peril? Let me go;
Give me thy signet — trust me with the rest.
Sar. I will trust no man with unlimited lives.
When we take those from others, we nor know
What we have taken, nor the thing we give.
Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives who seek for thine?
Sar. That's a hard question — But I answer, Yes.
Cannot the thing be done without? Who are they
Whom thou suspectest? — Let them be arrested.
Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me; the next moment
Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all. —
Trust me.
Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever:
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*
Sal. I have one more request. —
Sar. Name it.
Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates.
Sar. Forbear the banquet! Not for all the plotters
That ever shook a kingdom! Let them come,
And do their worst: I shall not blench for them;
Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the goblet;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour. — I fear them not.
Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou not, if needful?
Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armour, and
A sword of such a temper; and a bow

And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth:
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on't, 'tis long since I've used them,
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother?
Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling?—
If need be, wilt thou wear them?
Sar. Will I not?
Oh! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I'll use the sword
Till they shall wish it turn'd into a distaff.
Sal. They say thy sceptre's turn'd to that already.
Sar. That's false! but let them say so: the old Greeks,
Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen: thou seest
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.
Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.
Sar. No;
They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat;
And never changed their chains but for their armour:
Now they have peace and pastime, and the license
To revel and to rail; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamour?
Sal. You have said they are men;
As such their hearts are something.

Sar. So my dogs' are; (1)
And better, as more faithful:—but, proceed;
Thou hast my signet:—since they are tumultuous,
Let them be temper'd, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,
Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life:
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal! done all I could to soothe them:
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.

Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.

Sar. They lie.—Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king instead.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to be so.

Sar. What mean'st thou!—'tis thy secret; thou desirest
Few questions, and I'm not of curious nature.
Take the fit steps; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er
Was man who more desired to rule in peace

(1) [See Vol. VII. *ante*, p. 292.]

The peaceful only: if they rouse me, better
They had conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
"The mighty hunter." I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who *were*,
But *would* no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie; *that which*
They yet may find me—shall defy their wish
To speak it worse; and let them thank themselves.

Sal. Then thou at last canst feel?

Sar. Feel! who feels not
Ingratitude?

Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy
Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy reign,
As powerful in thy realm. Farewell!

[*Exit* SALEMENES.

Sar. (*solus*). Farewell!
He's gone; and on his finger bears my signet,
Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
As I am heedless; and the slaves deserve
To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not: he hath found it, let him quell it.
Must I consume my life—this little life—
In guarding against all may make it less? (1)
It is not worth so much! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
Tracing revolt; suspecting all about me,

(1) [The epicurean philosophy of Sardanapalus gives him a fine opportunity, in his conferences with his stern and confidential adviser, Salemenes, to contrast his own imputed and fatal vices of ease and love of pleasure with the boasted virtues of his predecessors, war and conquest. —JEFFREY.]

Because they are near; and all who are remote,
Because they are far. But if it should be so—
If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
Why, what is earth or empire of the earth?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image;
To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay! 'Tis true I have not shed
Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of death—
A terror and a trophy. But for this
I feel no penitence; my life is love:
If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest coin
Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavish'd
On objects which could cost her sons a tear:
If then they hate me, 'tis because I hate not:
If they rebel, 'tis because I oppress not.
Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
And mow'd down like the grass, else all we reap
Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
Making a desert of fertility.—
I'll think no more.——Within there, ho!

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sar. Slave, tell
The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence.

Attend. King, she is here.

MYRRHA *enters.*

Sar. (*apart to Attendant*). Away!

(*Addressing* MYRRHA). Beautiful being!
Thou dost almost anticipate my heart;
It throbb'd for thee, and here thou comest: let me
Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet oracle,
Communicates between us, though unseen,
In absence, and attracts us to each other.

Myr. There doth.

Sar. I know there doth, but not its name:
What is it?

Myr. In my native land a God,
And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
Exalted; yet I own 'tis only mortal;
For what I feel is humble, and yet happy—
That is, it would be happy; but——

[MYRRHA *pauses.*

Sar. There comes
For ever something between us and what
We deem our happiness: let me remove
The barrier which that hesitating accent
Proclaims to thine, and mine is seal'd.

Myr. My lord!—

Sar. My lord—my king—sire—sovereign; thus it is—
For ever thus, address'd with awe. I ne'er
Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet's
Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaff'd me down to their abasement.
Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these names,
Lord—king—sire—monarch—nay, time was I prized them;

That is, I suffer'd them—from slaves and nobles;
But when they falter from the lips I love,
The lips which have been press'd to mine, a chill
Comes o'er my heart, a cold sense of the falsehood
Of this my station, which represses feeling
In those for whom I have felt most, and makes me
Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
And share a cottage on the Caucasus
With thee, and wear no crowns but those of flowers.

Myr. Would that we could!

Sar. And dost *thou* feel this?—Why?

Myr. Then thou wouldst know what thou canst never know.

Sar. And that is——

Myr. The true value of a heart;
At least, a woman's.

Sar. I have proved a thousand—
A thousand, and a thousand.

Myr. Hearts?

Sar. I think so.

Myr. Not one! the time may come thou may'st.

Sar. It will.
Hear, Myrrha; Salemenes has declared—
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more than I—
But Salemenes hath declared my throne
In peril.

Myr. He did well.

Sar. And say'st *thou* so?
Thou whom he spurn'd so harshly, and now dared(1)

(1) [MS. ——"and even dared
Profane our presence with his savage jeers."]

Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?
Myr. I should do both
More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spakest of peril—
Peril to thee——
Sar. Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes—and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man—it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we'll think no more on't—
But of the midnight festival.
Myr. 'Tis time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurn'd his sage cautions?
Sar. What?—and dost thou fear?
Myr. Fear?—I'm a Greek, and how should I fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?
Sar. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?
Myr. I love.
Sar. And do not I? I love thee far—far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced;—yet I blench not.
Myr. That means thou lovest nor thyself nor me;
For he who loves another loves himself,
Even for that other's sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost. [dared
Sar. Lost!—why, who is the aspiring chief who
Assume to win them?
Myr. Who is he should dread

To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?

Sar. Myrrha!

Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled
Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur.—King, I am your subject!
Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you!—
Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs—
A slave, and hating fetters—an Ionian,
And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!
Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?

Sar. *Save* me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
And what I seek of thee is love—not safety.

Myr. And without love where dwells security?

Sar. I speak of woman's love.

Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs
Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

Sar. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st music;
The very chorus of the tragic song(1)

(1) [To speak of "the tragic song" as the favourite pastime of Greece, two hundred years before Thespis, is an anachronism. Nor could Myrrha, at so early a period of her country's history, have spoken of their national hatred of kings, or of that which was equally the growth of a later age,—*their contempt for* "barbarians."—Heber.]

I have heard thee talk of as the favourite pastime
Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not—calm thee.
Myr. I weep not.—But I pray thee, do not speak
About my fathers or their land.
Sar. Yet oft
Thou speakest of them.
Myr. True—true: constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously;
But when another speaks of Greece, it wounds me.
Sar. Well, then, how wouldst thou *save* me, as thou saidst?
Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from all
The rage of the worst war—the war of brethren.
Sar. Why, child, I loathe all war, and warriors;
I live in peace and pleasure: what can man
Do more?
Myr. Alas! my lord, with common men
There needs too oft the show of war to keep
The substance of sweet peace; and, for a king,
'Tis sometimes better to be fear'd than loved.
Sar. And I have never sought but for the last.
Myr. And now art neither.
Sar. Dost *thou* say so, Myrrha?
Myr. I speak of civic popular love, *self*-love,
Which means that men are kept in awe and law,
Yet not oppress'd—at least they must not think so;
Or if they think so, deem it necessary,
To ward off worse oppression, their own passions.
A king of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and revel,
And love, and mirth, was never king of glory.
Sar. Glory! what's that?

Myr. Ask of the gods thy fathers.

Sar. They cannot answer; when the priests speak for them,
'Tis for some small addition to the temple.

Myr. Look to the annals of thine empire's founders.

Sar. They are so blotted o'er with blood, I cannot.
But what wouldst have? the empire *has been* founded.
I cannot go on multiplying empires.

Myr. Preserve thine own.

Sar. At least, I will enjoy it.
Come, Myrrha, let us go on to the Euphrates:
The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, deck'd for our return,
In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star; and we will sit
Crown'd with fresh flowers like——

Myr. Victims.

Sar. No, like sovereigns,
The shepherd king of patriarchal times,
Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths, (1)
And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. May the king live for ever!

Sar. Not an hour
Longer than he can love. How my soul hates
This language, which makes life itself a lie,

(1) [MS. — "Who loved no gems so well as those of nature."]

Flattering dust with eternity. (1) Well, Pania!
Be brief.

Pan. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the king,
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace: when the general returns,
He will adduce such reasons as will warrant
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.

Sar. What! am I then coop'd?
Already captive? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven? Tell prince Salemenes,
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.

Pan. I must obey, and yet—

Myr. Oh, monarch, listen.—
How many a day and moon thou hast reclined
Within these palace walls in silken dalliance,
And never shown thee to thy people's longing;
Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
The satraps uncontroll'd, the gods unworshipp'd,
And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
Till all, save evil, slumber'd through the realm!
And wilt thou not now tarry for a day,—
A day which may redeem thee? Wilt thou not
Yield to the few still faithful a few hours,
For them, for thee, for thy past father's race,
And for thy sons' inheritance?

Pan. 'Tis true!
From the deep urgency with which the prince

(1) [MS. — "Wishing eternity to dust."]

Despatch'd me to your sacred presence, I
Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
Which now has spoken.
Sar. No, it must not be.
Myr. For the sake of thy realm!
Sar. Away!
Pan. For that
Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
Round thee and thine.
Sar. These are mere fantasies;
There is no peril:—'tis a sullen scheme
Of Salemenes, to approve his zeal,
And show himself more necessary to us. [counsel.
Myr. By all that's good and glorious take this
Sar. Business to-morrow.
Myr. Ay, or death to-night.
Sar. Why let it come then unexpectedly
'Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and love;
So let me fall like the pluck'd rose!—far better
Thus than be wither'd.
Myr. Then thou wilt not yield,
Even for the sake of all that ever stirr'd
A monarch into action, to forego
A trifling revel.
Sar. No.
Myr. Then yield for *mine;*
For my sake!
Sar. Thine, my Myrrha!
Myr. 'Tis the first
Boon which I ever ask'd Assyria's king.
Sar. That's true, and wer't my kingdom must be granted.

Well, for thy sake, I yield me. Pania, hence!
Thou hear'st me.

Pan. And obey. [*Exit* PANIA.

Sar. I marvel at thee.
What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge me?

Myr. Thy safety; and the certainty that nought
Could urge the prince thy kinsman to require
Thus much from thee, but some impending danger.

Sar. And if I do not dread it, why shouldst thou?

Myr. Because *thou* dost not fear, I fear for *thee.*

Sar. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these vain fancies.

Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where none weep,
And that is better than the power to smile.
And thou?

Sar. I shall be king, as heretofore.

Myr. Where?

Sar. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semiramis,
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.
Fate made me what I am—may make me nothing—
But either that or nothing must I be:
I will not live degraded.

Myr. Hadst thou felt
Thus always, none would ever dare degrade thee.

Sar. And who will do so now?

Myr. Dost thou suspect none?

Sar. Suspect!—that's a spy's office. Oh! we lose
Ten thousand precious moments in vain words,
And vainer fears. Within there!—ye slaves, deck
The hall of Nimrod for the evening revel:
If I must make a prison of our palace,
At least we'll wear our fetters jocundly;

If the Euphrates be forbid us, and
The summer dwelling on its beauteous border,
Here we are still unmenaced. Ho! within there!

[*Exit* SARDANAPALUS.

Myr. (*sola*). Why do I love this man? My country's daughters
Love none but heroes. But I have no country!
The slave hath lost all save her bonds. I love him;
And that's the heaviest link of the long chain—
To love whom we esteem not. Be it so:
The hour is coming when he'll need all love,
And find none. To fall from him now were baser
Than to have stabb'd him on his throne when highest
Would have been noble in my country's creed:
I was not made for either. Could I save him,
I should not love *him* better, but myself;
And I have need of the last, for I have fallen
In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger:
And yet methinks I love him more, perceiving
That he is hated of his own barbarians,
The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.
Could I but wake a single thought like those
Which even the Phrygians felt when battling long
'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart,
He would tread down the barbarous crowds, and triumph.
He loves me, and I love him; the slave loves
Her master, and would free him from his vices.
If not, I have a means of freedom still,
And if I cannot teach him how to reign,

May show him how alone a king can leave
His throne. I must not lose him from my sight.
[*Exit.* (1)

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Portal of the same Hall of the Palace.

Beleses (*solus*). The sun goes down: methinks he sets more slowly,
Taking his last look of Assyria's empire.
How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,
Like the blood he predicts. If not in vain,
Thou sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise,
I have outwatch'd ye, reading ray by ray
The edicts of your orbs, which make Time tremble
For what he brings the nations, 'tis the furthest

(1) [There are two of Lord Byron's characteristic excellences which he never leaves behind in his most fantastic expeditions, and which he has accordingly brought into his new domain of classic tragedy. One of these is his intense feeling of the loveliness of woman — his power, not only of picturing individual forms, but of infusing into the very atmosphere which surrounds them the spirit of beauty and of love. A soft roseate light is spread over them, which seems to sink into the soul. The other faculty to which we allude is his comprehensive sympathy with the vastest objects in the material universe. There is scarcely any pure description of individual scenes in all his works; but the noblest allusions to the grandeurs of earth and heaven. He pays "no allegiance but to the elements." The moon, the stars, the ocean, the mountain desert, are endowed by him with new "speech and language," and send to the heart their mighty voices. He can interpret between us and the firmament, or give us all the sentiment of an everlasting solitude. — ANON.]

Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm!
An earthquake should announce so great a fall—
A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk,
To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon
Its everlasting page the end of what
Seem'd everlasting; but oh! thou true sun!
The burning oracle of all that live,
As fountain of all life, and symbol of
Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou limit
Thy lore unto calamity? Why not
Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine
All-glorious burst from ocean? why not dart
A beam of hope athwart the future years,
As of wrath to its days? Hear me! oh, hear me!
I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant—
I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,
And bow'd my head beneath thy mid-day beams,
When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watch'd
For thee, and after thee, and pray'd to thee,
And sacrificed to thee, and read, and fear'd thee,
And ask'd of thee, and thou hast answer'd—but
Only to thus much: while I speak, he sinks—
Is gone—and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
To the delighted west, which revels in
Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is
Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset;
And mortals may be happy to resemble
The gods but in decay.

Enter ARBACES, *by an inner door.*

Arb. Beleses, why
So rapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand

Gazing to trace thy disappearing god
Into some realm of undiscover'd day?
Our business is with night—'tis come.
Bel. But not
Gone.
Arb. Let it roll on—we are ready.
Bel. Yes.
Would it were over!
Arb. Does the prophet doubt,
To whom the very stars shine victory?
Bel. I do not doubt of victory—but the victor.
Arb. Well, let thy science settle that. Meantime
I have prepared as many glittering spears
As will out-sparkle our allies—your planets.
There is no more to thwart us. The she-king,
That less than woman, is even now upon
The waters with his female mates. The order
Is issued for the feast in the pavilion.
The first cup which he drains will be the last
Quaff'd by the line of Nimrod.
Bel. 'Twas a brave one.
Arb. And is a weak one—'tis worn out—we'll mend it.
Bel. Art sure of that?
Arb. Its founder was a hunter—
I am a soldier—what is there to fear?
Bel. The soldier.
Arb. And the priest, it may be: but
If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
Why spur me to this enterprise? your own
No less than mine?

Bel. Look to the sky!
Arb. I look.
Bel. What seest thou?
Arb. A fair summer's twilight, and
The gathering of the stars.
Bel. And midst them, mark
Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so quivers,
As it would quit its place in the blue ether.
Arb. Well?
Bel. 'Tis thy natal ruler—thy birth planet.
Arb. (*touching his scabbard*). My star is in this scabbard: when it shines,
It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think
Of what is to be done to justify
Thy planets and their portents. When we conquer,
They shall have temples—ay, and priests—and thou
Shalt be the pontiff of—what gods thou wilt;
For I observe that they are ever just,
And own the bravest for the most devout.
Bel. Ay, and the most devout for brave—thou hast not
Seen me turn back from battle.
Arb. No; I own thee
As firm in fight as Babylonia's captain,
As skilful in Chaldea's worship: now,
Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
And be the warrior?
Bel. Why not both?
Arb. The better;
And yet it almost shames me, we shall have
So little to effect. This woman's warfare
Degrades the very conqueror. To have pluck'd

A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
And grappled with him, clashing steel with steel,
That were heroic or to win or fall;
But to upraise my sword against this silkworm,
And hear him whine, it may be——
Bel. Do not deem it:
He has that in him which may make you strife yet;
And were he all you think, his guards are hardy,
And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.
Arb. They'll not resist.
Bel. Why not? they are soldiers.
Arb. True,
And therefore need a soldier to command them.
Bel. That Salemenes is.
Arb. But not their king.
Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that governs,
For the queen's sake, his sister. Mark you not
He keeps aloof from all the revels?
Bel. But
Not from the council—there he is ever constant.
Arb. And ever thwarted: what would you have more
To make a rebel out of? A fool reigning,
His blood dishonour'd, and himself disdain'd:
Why, it is *his* revenge we work for.
Bel. Could
He but be brought to think so: this I doubt of.
Arb. What, if we sound him?
Bel. Yes—if the time served.

Enter BALEA.

Bal. Satraps! The king commands your presence
The feast to-night. [at

Bel. To hear is to obey.
In the pavilion?

Bal. No; here in the palace.

Arb. How! in the palace? it was not thus order'd.

Bal. It is so order'd now.

Arb. And why?

Bal. I know not.
May I retire?

Arb. Stay.

Bel. (*to Arb. aside*). Hush! let him go his way.
(*Alternately to Bal.*) Yes, Balea, thank the monarch, kiss the hem
Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
Will take the crums he deigns to scatter from
His royal table at the hour—was't midnight?

Bal. It was: the place, the hall of Nimrod. Lords,
I humble me before you, and depart. [*Exit* BALEA.

Arb. I like not this same sudden change of place;
There is some mystery: wherefore should he change it?

Bel. Doth he not change a thousand times a day?
Sloth is of all things the most fanciful—
And moves more parasangs in its intents
Than generals in their marches, when they seek
To leave their foe at fault.—Why dost thou muse?

Arb. He loved that gay pavilion,—it was ever
His summer dotage.

Bel. And he loved his queen—
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides—

And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and glory.
Arb. Still—I like it not.
If he has changed—why, so must we: the attack
Were easy in the isolated bower,
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken courtiers;
But in the hall of Nimrod——
Bel. Is it so?
Methought the haughty soldier fear'd to mount
A throne too easily—does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on?
Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shalt perceive how far I fear or no.
Thou hast seen my life at stake—and gaily play'd for:
But here is more upon the die—a kingdom.
Bel. I have foretold already—thou wilt win it:
Then on, and prosper.
Arb. Now were I a soothsayer,
I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obey'd—I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who's here?

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Satraps!
Bel. My prince!
Sal. Well met—I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.
Arb. Wherefore so?
Sal. 'Tis not the hour.
Arb. The hour!—what hour?

Sal. Of midnight.
Bel. Midnight, my lord!
Sal. What, are you not invited?
Bel. Oh! yes—we had forgotten.
Sal. Is it usual
Thus to forget a sovereign's invitation?
Arb. Why—we but now received it.
Sal. Then why here?
Arb. On duty.
Sal. On what duty?
Bel. On the state's.
We have the privilege to approach the presence;
But found the monarch absent. (1)
Sal. And I too
Am upon duty.
Arb. May we crave its purport?
Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards! Within there!

Enter Guards.

Sal. (*continuing*). Satraps,
Your swords.
Bel. (*delivering his*). My lord, behold my scimitar.
Arb. (*drawing his sword*). Take mine.
Sal. (*advancing*). I will.
Arb. But in your heart the blade—
The hilt quits not this hand. (2)
Sal. (*drawing*). How! dost thou brave me?
'Tis well—this saves a trial, and false mercy.
Soldiers, hew down the rebel!

(1) [MS. —"But found the monarch claim'd his privacy."]
(2) [MS. —"not else
It quits this living hand."]

Arb. Soldiers! Ay—
Alone you dare not.
Sal. Alone! foolish slave— [from
What is there in thee that a prince should shrink
Of open force? We dread thy treason, not
Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without its venom —
The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him down.
Bel. (*interposing*). Arbaces! Are you mad? Have I not render'd [tice.
My sword? Then trust like me our sovereign's jus-
Arb. No—I will sooner trust the stars thou prat'st
And this slight arm, and die a king at least [of,
Of my own breath and body — so far that
None else shall chain them.
Sal. (*to the Guards*). You hear *him* and *me*.
Take him not, — kill.
[*The Guards attack* ARBACES, *who defends himself valiantly and dexterously till they waver.*
Sal. Is it even so; and must
I do the hangman's office? Recreants! see
How you should fell a traitor.
[SALEMENES *attacks* ARBACES.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and Train.*

Sar. Hold your hands—
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or drunken?
My sword! O fool, I wear no sword: here, fellow,
Give me thy weapon. [*To a Guard.*
[SARDANAPALUS *snatches a sword from one of the soldiers, and rushes between the combatants — they separate.*

Sar. In my very palace!
What hinders me from cleaving you in twain,
Audacious brawlers?
Bel. Sire, your justice.
Sal. Or—
Your weakness.
Sar. (*raising the sword*). How?
Sal. Strike! so the blow's repeated
Upon yon traitor—whom you spare a moment,
I trust, for torture—I'm content.
Sar. What—him!
Who dares assail Arbaces?
Sal. I!
Sar. Indeed!
Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what warrant?
Sal. (*showing the signet*). Thine.
Arb. (*confused*). The king's!
Sal. Yes! and let the king confirm it.
Sar. I parted not from this for such a purpose.
Sal. You parted with it for your safety—I
Employ'd it for the best. Pronounce in person.
Here I am but your slave—a moment past
I was your representative.
Sar. Then sheathe
Your swords.

[ARBACES *and* SALEMENES *return their swords to the scabbards.*

Sal. Mine's sheathed: I pray you sheathe *not* yours:
'Tis the sole sceptre left you now with safety.
Sar. A heavy one; the hilt, too, hurts my hand.

(*To a Guard.*) Here, fellow, take thy weapon back.
Well, sirs,
What doth this mean?
Bel. The prince must answer that.
Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon theirs.
Sar. Treason—Arbaces! treachery and Beleses!
That were an union I will not believe.
Bel. Where is the proof?
Sal. I'll answer that, if once
The king demands your fellow-traitor's sword.
Arb. (*to Sal.*) A sword which hath been drawn as oft as thine
Against his foes.
Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.
Sar. That is not possible: he dared not; no—
No—I'll not hear of such things. These vain bickerings
Are spawn'd in courts by base intrigues, and baser
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives.
You must have been deceived, my brother.
Sal. First
Let him deliver up his weapon, and
Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,
And I will answer all.
Sar. Why, if I thought so—
But no, it cannot be: the Mede Arbaces—
The trusty, rough, true soldier—the best captain
Of all who discipline our nations——No,
I'll not insult him thus, to bid him render
The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your weapon.

Sal. (*delivering back the signet*). Monarch, take back your signet.

Sar. No, retain it;
But use it with more moderation.

Sal. Sire,
I used it for your honour, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.
Bestow it on Arbaces.

Sar. So I should:
He never ask'd it.

Sal. Doubt not, he will have it,
Without that hollow semblance of respect.

Bel. I know not what hath prejudiced the prince
So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than whom none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal.

Sal. Peace, factious priest, and faithless soldier! thou
Unit'st in thy own person the worst vices
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.
Keep thy smooth words and juggling homilies
For those who know thee not. Thy fellow's sin
Is, at the least, a bold one, and not temper'd
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.

Bel. Hear him,
My liege—the son of Belus! he blasphemes
The worship of the land, which bows the knee
Before your fathers.

Sar. Oh! for that I pray you
Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men; feeling that I
Am mortal, and believing that the race
From whence I sprung are—what I see them—[ashes.

Bel. King! Do not deem so; they are with the
And —— [stars,
Sar. You shall join them there ere they will rise,
If you preach farther—Why, *this* is rank treason.
Sal. My lord!
Sar. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols! Let him be released—
Give him his sword.
Sal. My lord, and king, and brother,
I pray ye pause.
Sar. Yes, and be sermonised,
And dinn'd, and deafen'd with dead men and Baal,
And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.
Bel. Monarch! respect them.
Sar. Oh! for that—I love them;
I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's eyes;
I love to see their rays redoubled in
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the broad
And rolling water, sighing through the sedges
Which fringe his banks: but whether they may be
Gods, as some say, or the abodes of gods,
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds, or the lights of worlds, I know nor care not.
There's something sweet in my uncertainty
I would not change for your Chaldean lore;
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it, or below it—nothing.
I see their brilliancy and feel their beauty—(1)
When they shine on my grave I shall know neither.

(1) [MS.—"I know them beautiful, and see them brilliant."]

Bel. For *neither*, sire, say *better*.
Sar. I will wait,
If it so please you, pontiff, for that knowledge.
In the mean time receive your sword, and know
That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry — not loving either.
Sal. (*aside*). His lusts have made him mad.
Then must I save him,
Spite of himself.
Sar. Please you to hear me, Satraps!
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I doubt thee
More than the soldier; and would doubt thee all
Wert thou not half a warrior: let us part
In peace — I'll not say pardon — which must be
Earn'd by the guilty; this I'll not pronounce ye,
Although upon this breath of mine depends
Your own; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not — for that I am soft, not fearful —
And so live on. Were I the thing some think me,
Your heads would now be dripping the last drops
Of their attainted gore from the high gates
Of this our palace, into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crown'd to reign o'er — let that pass.
As I have said, I will not *deem* ye guilty,
Nor *doom* ye guiltless. Albeit better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you;
And should I leave your fate to sterner judges,
And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
Two men, who, whatsoe'er they now are, were
Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.
Arb. Sire, this clemency——

Bel. (*interrupting him*). Is worthy of yourself
and, although innocent,
We thank——
Sar. Priest! keep your thanksgivings for Belus;
His offspring needs none.
Bel. But being innocent——
Sar. Be silent— Guilt is loud. If ye are loyal,
Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not grateful.
Bel. So we should be, were justice always done
By earthly power omnipotent; but innocence
Must oft receive her right as a mere favour.
Sar. That's a good sentence for a homily,
Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep it
To plead thy sovereign's cause before his people.
Bel. I trust there is no cause.
Sar. No *cause*, perhaps;
But many causers:—if ye meet with such
In the exercise of your inquisitive function
On earth, or should you read of it in heaven
In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
That there are worse things betwixt earth and
heaven
Than him who ruleth many and slays none;
And, hating not himself, yet loves his fellows
Enough to spare even those who would not spare
him
Were they once masters— but that's doubtful.
Satraps!
Your swords and persons are at liberty
To use them as ye will—but from this hour

I have no call for either. Salemenes!
Follow me. (1)

[*Exeunt* SARDANAPALUS, SALEMENES, *and the Train, &c. leaving* ARBACES *and* BELESES.

Arb. Beleses!

Bel. Now, what think you?

Arb. That we are lost.

Bel. That we have won the kingdom.

Arb. What? thus suspected—with the sword slung o'er us
But by a single hair, and that still wavering,
To be blown down by his imperious breath
Which spared us—why, I know not.

Bel. Seek not why;
But let us profit by the interval.
The hour is still our own—our power the same—
The night the same we destined. He hath changed
Nothing except our ignorance of all
Suspicion into such a certainty
As must make madness of delay.

Arb. And yet——

Bel. What, doubting still?

Arb. He spared our lives, nay, more,
Saved them from Salemenes.

Bel. And how long
Will he so spare? till the first drunken minute.

Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it nobly;

(1) [The second Act is, we think, a failure. The conspirators have a tedious dialogue, which is interrupted by Salemenes with a guard. Salemenes is followed by the king, who reverses all his measures, pardons Arbaces, because he will not believe him guilty, and Beleses, in order to escape from his long speeches about the national religion. This incident *only is* well managed. — HEBER.]

Gave royally what we had forfeited
Basely——
Bel. Say bravely.
Arb. Somewhat of both, perhaps.
But it has touch'd me, and, whate'er betide,
I will no further on.
Bel. And lose the world!
Arb. Lose any thing except my own esteem.
Bel. I blush that we should owe our lives to such
A king of distaffs!
Arb. But no less we owe them;
And I should blush far more to take the grantor's!
Bel. Thou may'st endure whate'er thou wilt—the [stars
Have written otherwise.
Arb. Though they came down,
And marshall'd me the way in all their brightness,
I would not follow.
Bel. This is weakness—worse
Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the dead,
And waking in the dark.—Go to—go to.
Arb. Methought he look'd like Nimrod as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the temple.
Bel. I told you that you had too much despised him,
And that there was some royalty within him—
What then? he is the nobler foe.
Arb. But we
The meaner.—Would he had not spared us!
Bel. So—
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily?

Arb. No—but it had been better to have died
Than live ungrateful.
Bel. Oh, the souls of some men!
Thou wouldst digest what some call treason, and
Fools treachery—and, behold, upon the sudden,
Because for something or for nothing, this
Rash reveller steps, ostentatiously,
'Twixt thee and Salemenes, thou art turn'd
Into—what shall I say?—Sardanapalus!
I know no name more ignominious.
Arb. But
An hour ago, who dared to term me such
Had held his life but lightly—as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave us—
Semiramis herself would not have done it.
Bel. No—the queen liked no sharers of the king-
Not even a husband. [dom,
Arb. I must serve him truly——
Bel. And humbly?
Arb. No, sir, proudly—being honest.
I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven;
And if not quite so haughty, yet more lofty.
You may do your own deeming—you have codes,
And mysteries, and corollaries of
Right and wrong, which I lack for my direction,
And must pursue but what a plain heart teaches.
And now you know me.
Bel. Have you finish'd?
Arb. Yes—
With you.
Bel. And would, perhaps, betray as well
As quit me?

Arb. That's a sacerdotal thought,
And not a soldier's.
Bel. Be it what you will—
Truce with these wranglings, and but hear me.
Arb. No—
There is more peril in your subtle spirit
Than in a phalanx.
Bel. If it must be so—
I'll on alone.
Arb. Alone!
Bel. Thrones hold but one.
Arb. But this is fill'd.
Bel. With worse than vacancy—
A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces:
I have still aided, cherish'd, loved, and urged you;
Was willing even to serve you, in the hope
To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself
Seem'd to consent, and all events were friendly,
Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk
Into a shallow softness; but now, rather
Than see my country languish, I will be
Her saviour or the victim of her tyrant,
Or one or both, for sometimes both are one;
And if I win, Arbaces is my servant.
Arb. *Your* servant!
Bel. Why not? better than be slave,
The *pardon'd* slave of *she* Sardanapalus!

Enter PANIA.

Pan. My lords, I bear an order from the king.
Arb. It is obey'd ere spoken.

Bel. Notwithstanding,
Let's hear it.
Pan. Forthwith, on this very night,
Repair to your respective satrapies
Of Babylon and Media.
Bel. With our troops?
Pan. My order is unto the satraps and
Their household train.
Arb. But ——
Bel. It must be obey'd:
Say, we depart.
Pan. My order is to see you
Depart, and not to bear your answer.
Bel. (*aside*). Ay!
Well, sir, we will accompany you hence.
Pan. I will retire to marshal forth the guard
Of honour which befits your rank, and wait
Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not.
[*Exit* PANIA.
Bel. *Now* then obey!
Arb. Doubtless.
Bel. Yes, to the gates
That grate the palace, which is now our prison—
No further.
Arb. Thou hast harp'd the truth indeed!
The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and me.
Bel. Graves!
Arb. If I thought so, this good sword should dig
One more than mine.
Bel. It shall have work enough.

Let me hope better than thou augurest;
At present, let us hence as best we may.
Thou dost agree with me in understanding
This order as a sentence?
Arb. Why, what other
Interpretation should it bear? it is
The very policy of orient monarchs—
Pardon and poison—favours and a sword—
A distant voyage, and an eternal sleep.
How many satraps in his father's time—
For he I own is, or at least *was*, bloodless—
Bel. But *will* not, *can* not be so now.
Arb. I doubt it.
How many satraps have I seen set out
In his sire's day for mighty vice-royalties,
Whose tombs are on their path! I know not how,
But they all sicken'd by the way, it was
So long and heavy.
Bel. Let us but regain
The free air of the city, and we'll shorten
The journey.
Arb. 'Twill be shorten'd at the gates,
It may be.
Bel. No; they hardly will risk that.
They mean us to die privately, but not
Within the palace or the city walls,
Where we are known, and may have partisans:
If they had meant to slay us here, we were
No longer with the living. Let us hence.
Arb. If I but thought he did not mean my life——

Bel. Fool! hence—what else should despotism alarm'd
Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops, and march.
Arb. Towards our provinces?
Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
There's time, there's heart, and hope, and power, and means,
Which their half measures leave us in full scope.—
Away!
Arb. And I even yet repenting must
Relapse to guilt!
Bel. Self-defence is a virtue,
Sole bulwark of all right. Away, I say!
Let's leave this place, the air grows thick and choking,
And the walls have a scent of night-shade—hence!
Let us not leave them time for further council.
Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
Our quick departure hinders our good escort,
The worthy Pania, from anticipating
The orders of some parasangs from hence:
Nay, there's no other choice, but——hence, I say.
[*Exit with* ARBACES, *who follows reluctantly.*(1)

(1) [Arbaces is a mere common-place warrior; and Beleses, on whom, we suspect, Lord Byron has bestowed more than usual pains, is a very ordinary and uninteresting villain. Sardanapalus, indeed, and Salemenes, are both made to speak of the wily Chaldean as the master-mover of the plot, as a politician in whose hands Arbaces is but a "warlike puppet;" and Diodorus Siculus has represented him, in fact, as the first instigator of Arbaces to his treason, and as making use of his priestly character, and his supposed power of foretelling future events, to inflame the ambition, to direct the measures, to sustain the hopes, and to reprove the despondency of his comrade. But of all this nothing appears in the tragedy. Lord Byron has been so anxious to show his own contempt for the priest, that he has not even allowed him that share of cunning and evil influence which was necessary for the part which he had to fill. Instead of being

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and* SALEMENES.

Sar. Well, all is remedied, and without bloodshed,
That worst of mockeries of a remedy;
We are now secure by these men's exile.

Sal. Yes,
As he who treads on flowers is from the adder
Twined round their roots.

Sar. Why, what wouldst have me do?

Sal. Undo what you have done.

Sar. Revoke my pardon?

Sal. Replace the crown now tottering on your temples.

Sar. That were tyrannical.

Sal. But sure.

Sar. We are so.
What danger can they work upon the frontier?

---

the original, the restless and unceasing prompter to bold and wicked measures, we find him, on his first appearance, hanging back from the enterprise, and chilling the energy of Arbaces by an enumeration of the real or possible difficulties which might yet impede its execution. Instead of exercising that power over the mind of his comrade which a religious imposter may well possess over better and more magnanimous souls than his own, Beleses is made to pour his predictions into incredulous ears; and Arbaces is as mere an epicurean in his creed as Sardanapalus. When we might have expected to find him gazing with hope and reverence on the star which the Chaldean points out as his natal planet, the Median warrior speaks, in the language of Mezentius, of the sword on which *his* confidence depends, and instead of being a tool in the hand of the pontiff, he says almost every thing which is likely to affront him. Though Beleses is introduced to us as engaged in devotion, and as a fervent worshipper of the Sun, he is nowhere made either to feel or to counterfeit that *professional* zeal against Sardanapalus which his open contempt of the gods would naturally call for; and no reason appears, throughout the play, why Arbaces should follow, against his own conscience and opinion, the counsels of a man of whom he speaks with dislike and disgust, and whose pretences to inspiration and sanctity he treats with unmingled ridicule. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Sal. They are not there yet—never should they be so,
Were I well listen'd to.
Sar. Nay, I *have* listen'd
Impartially to thee—why not to them?
Sal. You may know that hereafter; as it is,
I take my leave to order forth the guard.
Sar. And you will join us at the banquet?
Sal. Sire,
Dispense with me—I am no wassailer:
Command me in all service save the Bacchant's.
Sar. Nay, but 'tis fit to revel now and then.
Sal. And fit that some should watch for those who revel
Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?
Sar. Yes——Stay a moment, my good Salemenes,
My brother, my best subject, better prince
Than I am king. You should have been the monarch,
And I—I know not what, and care not; but
Think not I am insensible to all
Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough yet kind,
Though oft reproving, sufferance of my follies.
If I have spared these men against thy counsel,
That is, their lives—it is not that I doubt
The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will not
Cavil about their lives—so let them mend them.
Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,
Which their death had not left me.
Sal. Thus you run
The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors—
A moment's pang now changed for years of crime.
Still let them be made quiet.

Sar. Tempt me not:
My word is past.
Sal. But it may be recall'd.
Sar. 'Tis royal.
Sal. And should therefore be decisive.
This half indulgence of an exile serves
But to provoke—a pardon should be full,
Or it is none.
Sar. And who persuaded me
After I had repeal'd them, or at least
Only dismiss'd them from our presence, who
Urged me to send them to their satrapies?
Sal. True; that I had forgotten; that is, sire,
If they e'er reach'd their satrapies—why, then,
Reprove me more for my advice.
Sar. And if
They do not reach them—look to it!—in safety,
In safety, mark me—and security—
Look to thine own.
Sal. Permit me to depart;
Their *safety* shall be cared for.
Sar. Get thee hence, then;
And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.
Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign.
[*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. (*solus*). That man is of a temper too severe;
Hard but as lofty as the rock, and free
From all the taints of common earth—while I
Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers:
But as our mould is, must the produce be.
If I have err'd this time, 'tis on the side
Where error sits most lightly on that sense,

I know not what to call it; but it reckons
With me ofttimes for pain, and sometimes pleasure;
A spirit which seems placed about my heart
To count its throbs, not quicken them, and ask
Questions which mortal never dared to ask me,
Nor Baal, though an oracular deity — (1)
Albeit his marble face majestical
Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim
His brows to changed expression, till at times
I think the statue looks in act to speak.
Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous —
And here comes Joy's true herald.

Enter MYRRHA.

Myr. King! the sky
Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,
In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show
In forked flashes a commanding tempest. (2)
Will you then quit the palace?

Sar. Tempest, say'st thou?

Myr. Ay, my good lord.

Sar. For my own part, I should be
Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,
And watch the warring elements; but this
Would little suit the silken garments and
Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha,
Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds?

(1) [MS. — "Nor silent Baal, our imaged deity,
Although his marble face looks frowningly
As the dull shadows," &c.]

(2) [MS. — "In distant flashes { a wide-spreading / the approaching } tempest."]

Myr. In my own country we respect their voices
As auguries of Jove. (1)
Sar. Jove!—ay, your Baal—
Ours also has a property in thunder,
And ever and anon some falling bolt
Proves his divinity,—and yet sometimes
Strikes his own altars.
Myr. That were a dread omen.
Sar. Yes—for the priests. Well, we will not go forth
Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make
Our feast within.
Myr. Now, Jove be praised! that he
Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The gods
Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself,
And flash this storm between thee and thy foes,
To shield thee from them.
Sar. Child, if there be peril,
Methinks it is the same within these walls
As on the river's brink.
Myr. Not so; these walls
Are high and strong, and guarded. Treason has
To penetrate through many a winding way,
And massy portal; but in the pavilion
There is no bulwark.
Sar. No, nor in the palace,
Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle sits
Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be:
Even as the arrow finds the airy king,

(1) [MS.—"As from the gods to augur."]

The steel will reach the earthly. But be calm:
The men, or innocent or guilty, are
Banish'd, and far upon their way.
Myr. They live, then?
Sar. So sanguinary? *Thou!*
Myr. I would not shrink
From just infliction of due punishment
On those who seek your life: wer't otherwise,
I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.
Sar. This is strange;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.
Myr. 'Tis a Greek virtue.
Sar. But not a kingly one—I'll none on't; or
If ever I indulge in't, it shall be
With kings—my equals.
Myr. These men sought to be so.
Sar. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and springs
From fear——
Myr. For you.
Sar. No matter, still 'tis fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to wrath,
Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance, which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as from
The childish helplessness of Asian women. (1)
Myr. My lord, I am no boaster of my love,
Nor of my attributes; I have shared your splendour
And will partake your fortunes. You may live

(1) [MS.—"The weaker merit of our Asian women."]

To find one slave more true than subject myriads:
But this the gods avert! I am content
To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
Rather than prove it to you in your griefs, (1)
Which might not yield to any cares of mine.

Sar. Grief cannot come where perfect love exists,
Except to heighten it, and vanish from
That which it could not scare away. Let's in—
The hour approaches, and we must prepare
To meet the invited guests who grace our feast.

[*Exeunt.* (2)

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Hall of the Palace illuminated—SARDANAPALUS *and his Guests at Table.—A Storm without, and Thunder occasionally heard during the Banquet.*

Sar. Fill full! why this is as it should be: here
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.

Zam. Nor elsewhere—where the king is, pleasure sparkles.

Sar. Is not this better now than Nimrod's huntings,

(1) [MS. — "Rather than prove that love to you in griefs."]

(2) [The second Act, which contains the details of the conspiracy of Arbaces, its detection by the vigilance of Salemenes, and the too rash and hasty forgiveness of the rebels by the king, is, on the whole, heavy and uninteresting. — JEFFREY.]

Or my wild grandam's chase in search of kingdoms
She could not keep when conquer'd?

Alt. Mighty though
They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of those who went before have reach'd
The acmé of Sardanapalus, who
Has placed his joy in peace—the sole true glory.

Sar. And pleasure, good Altada, to which glory
Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to it,
And not gone tracking it through human ashes,
Making a grave with every footstep.

Zam. No;
All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The king of peace, who holds a world in jubilee.

Sar. Art sure of that? I have heard otherwise;
Some say that there be traitors.

Zam. Traitors they
Who dare to say so!—'Tis impossible.
What cause?

Sar. What cause? true,—fill the goblet up;
We will not think of them: there are none such,
Or if there be, they are gone.

Alt. Guests, to my pledge!
Down on your knees, and drink a measure to
The safety of the king—the monarch, say I?
The god Sardanapalus!

[ZAMES *and the Guests kneel and exclaim*—
Mightier than
His father Baal, the god Sardanapalus!

[*It thunders as they kneel; some start up in confusion.*

Zam. Why do you rise, my friends? in that strong peal
His father gods consented.
Myr. Menaced, rather.
King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?
Sar. Impiety!—nay, if the sires who reign'd
Before me can be gods, I'll not disgrace
Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends;
Hoard your devotion for the thunderer there:
I seek but to be loved, not worshipp'd.
Alt. Both—
Both you must ever be by all true subjects.
Sar. Methinks the thunders still increase: it is
An awful night.
Myr. Oh yes, for those who have
No palace to protect their worshippers.
Sar. That's true, my Myrrha; and could I convert
My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched,
I'd do it.
Myr. Thou'rt no god, then, not to be
Able to work a will so good and general,
As thy wish would imply.
Sar. And your gods, then,
Who can, and do not?
Myr. Do not speak of that,
Lest we provoke them.
Sar. True, they love not censure
Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has struck me:
Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be
Air worshippers? that is, when it is angry,
And pelting as even now.

Myr. The Persian prays
Upon his mountain.
Sar. Yes, when the sun shines.
Myr. And I would ask if this your palace were
Unroof'd and desolate, how many flatterers
Would lick the dust in which the king lay low?
Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic
Upon a nation whom she knows not well;
The Assyrians know no pleasure but their king's,
And homage is their pride.
Sar. Nay, pardon, guests,
The fair Greek's readiness of speech.
Alt. *Pardon!* sire:
We honour her of all things next to thee.
Hark! what was that?
Zam. That! nothing but the jar
Of distant portals shaken by the wind.
Alt. It sounded like the clash of—hark again!
Zam. The big rain pattering on the roof.
Sar. No more.
Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order?
Sing me a song of Sappho, her, thou know'st,
Who in thy country threw——

Enter PANIA, *with his sword and garments bloody, and disordered. The Guests rise in confusion.* (1)
Pan. (*to the Guards*). Look to the portals;
And with your best speed to the walls without.

(1) [Early in the third Act, the royal banquet is disturbed by sudden tidings of treason and revolt; and then the reveller blazes out into the hero, and the Greek blood of Myrrha mounts to its proper office!—JEFFREY.]

Your arms! To arms! The king's in danger. Mon-
Excuse this haste,—'tis faith. [arch!
Sar. Speak on.
Pan. It is
As Salemenes fear'd; the faithless satraps——
Sar. You are wounded—give some wine. Take breath, good Pania.
Pan. 'Tis nothing—a mere flesh wound. I am worn
More with my speed to warn my sovereign,
Than hurt in his defence.
Myr. Well, sir, the rebels?
Pan. Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reach'd
Their stations in the city, they refused
To march; and on my attempt to use the power
Which I was delegated with, they call'd
Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.
Myr. All?
Pan. Too many.
Sar. Spare not of thy free speech,
To spare mine ears the truth.
Pan. My own slight guard
Were faithful, and what's left of it is still so.
Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?
Pan. No—
The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes,
Who even then was on his way, still urged
By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs,
Are numerous, and make strong head against
The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming
An orb around the palace, where they mean
To centre all their force, and save the king.

(*He hesitates.*) I am charged to——
Myr. 'Tis no time for hesitation.
Pan. Prince Salemenes doth implore the king
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.
Sar. What, ho!
My armour there.
Myr. And wilt thou?
Sar. Will I not?
Ho, there!—but seek not for the buckler: 'tis
Too heavy:—a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?
Pan. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall the fiercest conflict rages.
Sar. Then I may charge on horseback. Sfero, ho!
Order my horse out.—There is space enough
Even in our courts, and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.
[*Exit* SFERO *for the armour.*
Myr. How I do love thee!
Sar. I ne'er doubted it.
Myr. But now I know thee.
Sar. (*to his Attendant.*) Bring down my spear too.—
Where's Salemenes?
Pan. Where a soldier should be,
In the thick of the fight.
Sar. Then hasten to him——Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?
Pan. 'Twas

When I late left him, and I have no fear:
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx form'd.
Sar. Tell him to spare his person for the present,
And that I will not spare my own—and say,
I come.
Pan. There's victory in the very word.
[*Exit* PANIA.
Sar. Altada—Zames—forth, and arm ye! There
Is all in readiness in the armoury.
See that the women are bestow'd in safety
In the remote apartments: let a guard
Be set before them, with strict charge to quit
The post but with their lives—command it, Zames.
Altada, arm yourself, and return here;
Your post is near our person.
[*Exeunt* ZAMES, ALTADA, *and all save* MYRRHA.

Enter SFERO *and others with the King's Arms, &c.*
Sfe. King! your armour.
Sar. (*arming himself.*) Give me the cuirass—so:
my baldric; now
My sword: I had forgot the helm—where is it?
That's well—no, 'tis too heavy: you mistake, too—
It was not this I meant, but that which bears
A diadem around it.
Sfe. Sire, I deem'd
That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath—and trust me,
This is of better metal, though less rich. [Fellow!
Sar. You deem'd! Are you too turn'd a rebel?
Your part is to obey: return, and—no—
It is too late—I will go forth without it.

Sfe. At least, wear this.

Sar. Wear Caucasus! why, 'tis
A mountain on my temples.

Sfe. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to battle.
All men will recognise you—for the storm
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in her brightness.

Sar. I go forth to be recognised, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now—my spear! I'm arm'd.
[*In going stops short, and turns to* SFERO.
Sfero—I had forgotten—bring the mirror. (1)

Sfe. The mirror, sire?

Sar. Yes, sir, of polish'd brass,
Brought from the spoils of India—but be speedy. (2)
[*Exit* SFERO.

Sar. Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?

Myr. Because my place is here.

(1) ["In the third Act, where Sardanapalus calls for a mirror to look at himself in his armour, recollect to quote the Latin passage from Juvenal upon Otho (a similar character, who did the same thing). Gifford will help you to it. The trait is, perhaps, too familiar, but it is historical (of Otho, at least), and natural in an effeminate character."—*Lord B. to Mr. M.*]

(2) ["Ille tenet speculum pathici gestamen Othonis,
Actoris Aruncі spolium, quo se ille videbat
Armatum, cum jam tolli vexilla juberet.
Res memoranda novis annalibus, atque recenti
Historia, speculum civilis farcina belli."—JUV. *Sat.* ii.

"This grasps a mirror—pathic Otho's boast
(Auruncan Actor's spoil), where, while his host,
With shouts, the signal of the fight required,
He view'd his mailed form; view'd, and admired!
Lo, a new subject for the historic page,
A MIRROR, midst the arms of civil rage!"—GIFFORD.]

Sar. And when I am gone——
Myr. I follow.
Sar. *You!* to battle?
Myr. If it were so,
'Twere not the first Greek girl had trod the path.
I will await here your *return.*
Sar. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail; and, if it be so,
And I return not——
Myr. Still we meet again.
Sar. How?
Myr. In the spot where all must meet at last—
In Hades! if there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the Styx: and if there be not,
In ashes.
Sar. Darest thou so much?
Myr. I dare all things
Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel's booty: forth, and do your bravest.

Re-enter SFERO *with the mirror.*

Sar. (*looking at himself.*) This cuirass fits me well, the baldric better,
And the helm not at all. Methinks I seem
[*Flings away the helmet after trying it again.*
Passing well in these toys; and now to prove them.
Altada! Where's Altada?
Sfe. Waiting, sire,
Without: he has your shield in readiness.
Sar. True; I forgot he is my shield-bearer

By right of blood, derived from age to age.
Myrrha, embrace me; — yet once more — once more —
Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory
Shall be to make me worthier of your love.

Myr. Go forth, and conquer!

[*Exeunt* SARDANAPALUS *and* SFERO.(1)

Now, I am alone,
All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return. Let him but vanquish, and
Me perish! If he vanquish not, I perish;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound
About my heart, I know not how nor why.
Not for that he is king; for now his kingdom
Rocks underneath his throne, and the earth yawns
To yield him no more of it than a grave;
And yet I love him more. Oh, mighty Jove!
Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian,
Who knows not of Olympus! yes, I love him
Now, now, far more than —— Hark — to the war shout!
Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,

[*She draws forth a small vial.*

This cunning Colchian poison, which my father
Learn'd to compound on Euxine shores, and taught me
How to preserve, shall free me! It had freed me

(1) [In the third Act, the king and his courtiers are disturbed at their banquet by the breaking out of the conspiracy. The battle which follows, if we overlook the absurdity, which occurs during one part of it, of hostile armies drawn up against each other in a dining-room, is extremely well told; and Sardanapalus displays the precise mixture of effeminacy and courage, levity and talent, which belongs to his character. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Long ere this hour, but that I loved, until
I half forgot I was a slave:—where all
Are slaves save one, and proud of servitude,
So they are served in turn by something lower
In the degree of bondage, we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no less
Are chains. Again that shout! and now the clash
Of arms—and now—and now——

Enter ALTADA.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho!

Myr. He is not here; what wouldst thou with him? How
Goes on the conflict?

Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.

Myr. And the king?

Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero,
And bring him a new spear and his own helmet.
He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face,
And the foe too; and in the moon's broad light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair
Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,
And the broad fillet which crowns both.

Myr. Ye gods,
Who fulminate o'er my father's land, protect him!
Were you sent by the king?

Alt. By Salemenes,
Who sent me privily upon this charge,
Without the knowledge of the careless sovereign.
The king! the king fights as he revels! ho!

What, Sfero! I will seek the armoury—
He must be there. [*Exit* ALTADA.

Myr. 'Tis no dishonour—no—
'Tis no dishonour to have loved this man.
I almost wish now, what I never wish'd
Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides
Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's
She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff; surely
He, who springs up a Hercules at once,
Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to manhood,
And rushes from the banquet to the battle,
As though it were a bed of love, deserves
That a Greek girl should be his paramour,
And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek tomb
His monument. How goes the strife, sir?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Lost,
Lost almost past recovery. Zames! Where
Is Zames?

Myr. Posted with the guard appointed
To watch before the apartment of the women.
[*Exit Officer.*

Myr. (*sola.*) He's gone; and told no more than
that all's lost!
What need have I to know more? In those words,
Those little words, a kingdom and a king,
A line of thirteen ages, and the lives
Of thousands, and the fortune of all left
With life, are merged; and I, too, with the great,
Like a small bubble breaking with the wave
Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the least,

My fate is in my keeping: no proud victor
Shall count me with his spoils.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. Away with me,
Myrrha, without delay; we must not lose
A moment—all that's left us now.
Myr. The king?
Pan. Sent me here to conduct you hence, beyond
The river, by a secret passage.
Myr. Then
He lives——
Pan. And charged me to secure your life,
And beg you to live on for his sake, till
He can rejoin you.
Myr. Will he then give way?
Pan. Not till the last. Still, still he does whate'er
Despair can do; and step by step disputes
The very palace.
Myr. They are here, then:—ay,
Their shouts come ringing through the ancient halls,
Never profaned by rebel echoes till
This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line!
Farewell to all of Nimrod! Even the name
Is now no more.
Pan. Away with me—away!
Myr. No: I'll die here!—Away, and tell your [king
I loved him to the last.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and* SALEMENES *with Soldiers.* PANIA *quits* MYRRHA, *and ranges himself with them.*

Sar. Since it is thus,
We'll die where we were born—in our own halls.
Serry your ranks—stand firm. I have despatch'd
A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
All fresh and faithful; they'll be here anon.
All is not over.—Pania, look to Myrrha.

[PANIA *returns towards* MYRRHA.

Sal. We have breathing time; yet once more charge, my friends—
One for Assyria!

Sar. Rather say for Bactria!
My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we'll hold together
This realm as province.

Sal. Hark! they come—they come.

Enter BELESES *and* ARBACES *with the Rebels.*

Arb. Set on, we have them in the toil. Charge! charge!

Bel. On! on!—Heaven fights for us, and with us—On!

[*They charge the King and* SALEMENES *with their Troops, who defend themselves till the Arrival of* ZAMES, *with the Guard before mentioned. The Rebels are then driven off, and pursued by* SALEMENES, *&c. As the King is going to join the pursuit,* BELESES *crosses him.*

Bel. Ho! tyrant—*I* will end this war.
Sar. Even so,
My warlike priest, and precious prophet, and
Grateful and trusty subject:—yield, I pray thee.
I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.
Bel. Thine hour is come.
Sar. No, thine.—I've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy fate
In the sign of the Scorpion, which proclaims
That thou wilt now be crush'd.
Bel. But not by thee.
[*They fight;* BELESES *is wounded and disarmed.*
Sar. (*raising his sword to despatch him, exclaims*)—
Now call upon thy planets, will they shoot
From the sky to preserve their seer and credit?
[*A party of Rebels enter and rescue* BELESES. *They assail the King, who, in turn, is rescued by a Party of his Soldiers, who drive the Rebels off.*
The villain was a prophet after all.
Upon them—ho! there—victory is ours.
[*Exit in pursuit.*
Myr. (*to Pan.*) Pursue! Why stand'st thou here,
and leavest the ranks
Of fellow-soldiers conquering without thee?
Pan. The king's command was not to quit thee.
Myr. *Me!*
Think not of me—a single soldier's arm
Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard,
I need no guard: what, with a world at stake,

Keep watch upon a woman? Hence, I say,
Or thou art shamed! Nay, then, *I* will go forth,
A feeble female, 'midst their desperate strife,
And bid thee guard me *there*—where thou shouldst shield
Thy sovereign. [*Exit* MYRRHA.

Pan. Yet stay, damsel! She's gone.
If aught of ill betide her, better I
Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her
Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights
For that too; and can I do less than he,
Who never flash'd a scimitar till now?
Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though
In disobedience to the monarch. [*Exit* PANIA

Enter ALTADA *and* SFERO *by an opposite door.*

Alt. Myrrha!
What, gone? yet she was here when the fight raged
And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them?

Sfe. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled:
They probably are but retired to make
Their way back to the harem.

Alt. If the king
Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doom'd
To worse than captive rebels.

Sfe. Let us trace them;
She cannot be fled far; and, found, she makes
A richer prize to our soft sovereign
Than his recover'd kingdom.

Alt. Baal himself
Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than

His silken son to save it: he defies
All augury of foes or friends; and like
The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes
A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder
As sweeps the air and deluges the earth.
The man's inscrutable.
Sfe. Not more than others.
All are the sons of circumstance: away—
Let's seek the slave out, or prepare to be
Tortured for his infatuation, and
Condemn'd without a crime. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SALEMENES *and Soldiers, &c.*

Sal. The triumph is
Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,
And we have open'd regular access
To the troops station'd on the other side
Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,
When they hear of our victory. But where
Is the chief victor? where's the king?

Enter SARDANAPALUS, *cum suis, &c. and* MYRRHA.

Sar. Here, brother. (1)
Sal. Unhurt, I hope.
Sar. Not quite; but let it pass.
We've clear'd the palace——
Sal. And I trust the city.
Our numbers gather; and I've ordered onward
A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved,

(1) [The king, by his daring valour, restores the fortune of the fight, and returns, with all his train, to the palace. The scene that ensues is very masterly and characteristic. — JEFFREY.]

All fresh and fiery, to be pour'd upon them
In their retreat, which soon will be a flight.
Sar. It is already, or at least they march'd
Faster than I could follow with my Bactrians,
Who spared no speed. I am spent: give me a seat.
Sal. There stands the throne, sire.
Sar. 'Tis no place to rest on,
For mind nor body: let me have a couch,
[*They place a seat.*
A peasant's stool, I care not what: so—now
I breathe more freely.
Sal. This great hour has proved
The brightest and most glorious of your life.
Sar. And the most tiresome. Where 's my cup-bearer?
Bring me some water.
Sal. (*smiling.*) 'Tis the first time he
Ever had such an order: even I,
Your most austere of counsellors, would now
Suggest a purpler beverage.
Sar. Blood—doubtless.
But there's enough of that shed; as for wine,
I have learn'd to-night the price of the pure element:
Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice renew'd,
With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,
My charge upon the rebels. Where's the soldier
Who gave me water in his helmet?
One of the Guards. Slain, sire!
An arrow pierced his brain, while, scattering
The last drops from his helm, he stood in act
To place it on his brows.
Sar. Slain! unrewarded!

And slain to serve my thirst: that's hard, poor slave!
Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with
Gold: all the gold of earth could ne'er repay
The pleasure of that draught; for I was parch'd
As I am now. [*They bring water—he drinks.*
I live again—from henceforth
The goblet I reserve for hours of love,
But war on water.

Sal. And that bandage, sire,
Which girds your arm?

Sal. A scratch from brave Beleses.

Myr. Oh! he is wounded!

Sar. Not too much of that;
And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,
Now I am cooler.

Myr. You have bound it with——

Sar. The fillet of my diadem: the first time
That ornament was ever aught to me,
Save an incumbrance.

Myr. (*to the Attendants.*) Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful: pray, retire:
I will unbind your wound and tend it.

Sar. Do so,
For now it throbs sufficiently: but what
Know'st thou of wounds? yet wherefore do I ask?
Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on
This minion?

Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frighten'd antelopes.

Sar. No: like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging,
(And femininely meaneth furiously,

Because all passions in excess are female,)
Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers,
In the pursuit.

Sal. Indeed!

Sar. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek; [hair
Her large black eyes, that flash'd through her long
As it stream'd o'er her; her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow; her nostril
Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice that clove through all the din,
As a lute's pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
Jarr'd but not drown'd by the loud brattling; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness
Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp;—all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself,
Come down to hail us hers.

Sal. (*aside*). This is too much.
Again the love-fit's on him, and all's lost,
Unless we turn his thoughts.
(*Aloud.*) But pray thee, sire,
Think of your wound—you said even now 'twas painful.

Sar. That's true, too; but I must not think of it.

Sal. I have look'd to all things needful, and will now
Receive reports of progress made in such

Orders as I had given, and then return
To hear your further pleasure.
Sar. Be it so.
Sal. (*in retiring*). Myrrha!
Myr. Prince!
Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my sister's lord—— But now
I have no time: thou lovest the king?
Myr. I love
Sardanapalus.
Sal. But wouldst have him king still?
Myr. I would not have him less than what he should be.
Sal. Well then, to have him king, and yours, and all
He should, or should not be; to have him *live*,
Let him not sink back into luxury.
You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
Raging without: look well that he relapse not.
Myr. There needed not the voice of Salemenes
To urge me on to this: I will not fail.
All that a woman's weakness can——
Sal. Is power
Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his:
Exert it wisely. [*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. Myrrha! what, at whispers
With my stern brother? I shall soon be jealous. (1)

(1) [The rebels are at length repulsed. The king re-enters wounded, and retires to rest, after a short and very characteristic conversation between Salemenes and Myrrha, in which the two kindred spirits show their mutual understanding of each other, and the loyal warrior, postponing all the selfish domestic feelings which led him to dislike the fair

Myr. (*smiling*). You have cause, sire; for on the earth there breathes not
A man more worthy of a woman's love —
A soldier's trust — a subject's reverence —
A king's esteem — the whole world's admiration! (1)

Sar. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not
Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
That throws me into shade; yet you speak truth.

Myr. And now retire, to have your wound look'd to.
Pray, lean on me.

Sar. Yes, love! but not from pain.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SARDANAPALUS *discovered sleeping upon a Couch, and occasionally disturbed in his Slumbers, with* MYRRHA *watching.*

Myr. (*sola, gazing*). I have stolen upon his rest, if rest it be,
Which thus convulses slumber: shall I wake him?
No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of Quiet!
Whose reign is o'er seal'd eyelids and soft dreams,
Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathom'd,

Ionian, exhorts her to use her utmost power to keep her lover from relaxing into luxury. The transient effect which their whispers produce on Sardanapalus is well imagined. — BISHOP HEBER.]

(1) [MS. — ". A king's esteem — the whole world's { admiration / veneration / reverence."]

Look like thy brother, Death,—so still—so stirless—
For then we are happiest, as it may be, we
Are happiest of all within the realm
Of thy stern, silent, and unwakening twin.
Again he moves—again the play of pain
Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm(1)
Beneath the mountain shadow; or the blast
Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping cling
Faintly and motionless to their loved boughs.
I must awake him—yet not yet: who knows
From what I rouse him? It seems pain; but if
I quicken him to heavier pain? The fever
Of this tumultuous night, the grief too of
His wound, though slight, may cause all this, and shake
Me more to see than him to suffer. No:
Let Nature use her own maternal means,—
And I await to second, not disturb her. (2)

Sar. (*awakening*). Not so—although ye multiplied
the stars,
And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you! I would not so purchase
The empire of eternity. Hence—hence—
Old hunter of the earliest brutes! and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes!
Once bloody mortals—and now bloodier idols,
If your priests lie not! And thou, ghastly beldame!

(1) [MS.—"Crisps the unswelling wave," &c.]

(2) [The fourth Act opens with Myrrha watching over the slumbers of Sardanapalus. He wakens and tells a horrid dream, which we do not much admire, except that part of it which describes the form of his warlike ancestress Semiramis, with whom, and the rest of his regal predecessors, he had fancied himself at a ghostly banquet.—Bishop Hurd.]

Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling on
The carcasses of Inde—away! away!
Where am I? Where the spectres? Where——
No—that
Is no false phantom: I should know it 'midst
All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living. Myrrha!

Myr. Alas! thou art pale, and on thy brow the drops
Gather like night dew. My beloved, hush—
Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another world,
And thou art lord of this. Be of good cheer;
All will go well.

Sar. Thy *hand*—so—'tis thy hand;
'Tis flesh; grasp—clasp—yet closer, till I feel
Myself that which I was.

Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be—thine.

Sar. I know it now. I know this life again.
Ah, Myrrha! I have been where we shall be.

Myr. My lord! [lords,

Sar. I've been i' the grave—where worms are
And kings are——But I did not deem it so;
I thought 'twas nothing.

Myr. So it is; except
Unto the timid, who anticipate
That which may never be. (1)

(1) [The general tone of Myrrha's character (in perfect consistency with the manners of her age and nation, and with her own elevated but pure and feminine spirit,) is that of a devout worshipper of her country's gods. She reproves, with dignity, the impious flattery of the Assyrian courtiers and the libertine scoffs of the king. She does not forget, while preparing for death, that libation which was the latest and most solemn act of Grecian piety; and she, more particularly, expresses her belief in a future state of existence. Yet this very Myrrha, when Sardanapalus is agitated by his evil dream, and by the natural doubt as to what

Sar. Oh, Myrrha! if
Sleep shows such things, what may not death disclose?
Myr. I know no evil death can show, which life
Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed
A shore where mind survives, 'twill be as mind,
All unincorporate: or if there flits
A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay,
Which stalks, methinks, between our souls and heaven,
And fetters us to earth — at least the phantom,
Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear death.

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worse visions death may bring, is made to console him, in the strain of his own Epicurean philosophy, with the doctrine that death is really nothing, except

" Unto the timid who anticipate
That which may never be,"

and with the insinuation that all which remains of " the dead is the dust we tread upon." We do not wish to ask, we do not like to conjecture, *whose* sentiments these are, but they are certainly not the sentiments of an ancient Grecian heroine. They are not the sentiments which Myrrha might have learned from the heroes of her native land, or from the poems whence those heroes derived their heroism, their contempt of death, " and their love of virtue." Myrrha would rather have told her lover of those happy islands where the benevolent and the brave reposed after the toils of their mortal existence; of that venerable society of departed warriors and sages to which, if he renounced his sloth and lived for his people and for glory, he might yet expect admission. She would have told him of that joy with which his warlike ancestors would move along their meads of asphodel, when the news reached them of their descendant's prowess; she would have anticipated those songs which denied that " Harmodius was dead," however he might be removed from the sphere of mortality; which told her countrymen of the " roses and the golden-fruited bowers, where, beneath the light of a lower sun, departed warriors reined their shadowy cars, or struck their harps amid altars steaming with frankincense."* Such were the doctrines which naturally led men to a contempt for life and a thirst for glory: but the opposite opinions were the doubts of a later day; and of those sophists under whose influence Greece soon ceased to be free, or valiant, or virtuous." — BISHOP HEBER.]

* Hom. Odyss. λ. 539. Callistratus ap. Athenæum, l. xv. Pindar. Fragm. Heyne, vol. iii. p. 31.

Sar. I fear it not; but I have felt—have seen—
A legion of the dead.
Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,
And wretched. But proceed: what hast thou seen?
Speak it, 'twill lighten thy dimm'd mind.
Sar. Methought—
Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired — in pain — exhausted; all
Which can impair both strength and spirit: seek
Rather to sleep again.
Sar. Not now—I would not
Dream; though I know it now to be a dream
What I have dreamt:—and canst thou bear to hear it?
Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of life or death,
Which I participate with you in semblance
Or full reality.
Sar. And this look'd real,
I tell you: after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight—for then they fled.
Myr. Say on.
Sar. I saw, that is, I dream'd myself
Here—here — even where we are, guests as we were,
Myself a host that deem'd himself but guest,
Willing to equal all in social freedom;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead
Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd meeting,
Was ranged on my left hand a haughty, dark,
And deadly face — I could not recognise it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where:
The features were a giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted; his long locks curl'd down

On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feather'd from the eagle's wing,(1)
That peep'd up bristling through his serpent hair.
I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answer'd not — I fill'd it —
He took it not, but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fix'd glare of his eye:
I frown'd upon him as a king should frown —
He frown'd not in his turn, but look'd upon me
With the same aspect, which appall'd me more,
Because it changed not; and I turn'd for refuge
To milder guests, and sought them on the right,
Where thou wert wont to be. But——

[*He pauses.*

Myr. What instead?

Sar. In thy own chair — thy own place in the banquet —
I sought thy sweet face in the circle — but
Instead — a grey-hair'd, wither'd, bloody-eyed,
And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly thing,
Female in garb, and crown'd upon the brow,
Furrow'd with years, yet sneering with the passion
Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sate: — my veins curdled.

Myr. Is this all?

Sar. Upon
Her right hand — her lank, bird-like right hand — stood
A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood; and on

(1) [MS. "With arrows peeping through his falling hair."]

Her left, another, fill'd with—what I saw not,
But turn'd from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crowned wretches,
Of various aspects, but of one expression.

Myr. And felt you not this a mere vision?

Sar. No:
It was so palpable, I could have touch'd them.
I turn'd from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew
Ere I saw theirs: but no—all turn'd upon me,
And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but stared,
Till I grew stone, as they seem'd half to be,
Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,
And life in me: there was a horrid kind
Of sympathy between us, as if they
Had lost a part of death to come to me,
And I the half of life to sit by them.
We were in an existence all apart
From heaven or earth——And rather let me see
Death all than such a being!

Myr. And the end?

Sar. At last I sate, marble, as they, when rose
The hunter and the crone; and smiling on me—
Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
The hunter smiled upon me—I should say,
His lips, for his eyes moved not—and the woman's
Thin lips relax'd to something like a smile.
Both rose, and the crown'd figures on each hand
Rose also, as if aping their chief shades—
Mere mimics even in death—but I sate still:
A desperate courage crept through every limb,
And at the last I fear'd them not, but laugh'd

Full in their phantom faces. But then—then
The hunter laid his hand on mine: I took it,
And grasp'd it—but it melted from my own;
While he too vanish'd, and left nothing but
The memory of a hero, for he look'd so.

Myr. And was: the ancestor of heroes, too,
And thine no less.

Sar. Ay, Myrrha, but the woman,
The female who remain'd, she flew upon me,
And burnt my lips up with her noisome kisses;
And, flinging down the goblets on each hand,
Methought their poisons flow'd around us, till
Each form'd a hideous river. Still she clung;
The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
Embraced me, while I shrunk from her, as if,
In lieu of her remote descendant, I
Had been the son who slew her for her incest.
Then—then—a chaos of all loathsome things
Throng'd thick and shapeless: I was dead, yet feeling—
Buried, and raised again—consumed by worms,
Purged by the flames, and wither'd in the air!
I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
Save that I long'd for thee, and sought for thee,
In all these agonies,—and woke and found thee.

Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things—the mere creations
Of late events, acting upon a frame
Unused to toil, yet over-wrought by toil
Such as might try the sternest.

Sar. I am better.
Now that I see *thee once* more, *what was seen*
Seems nothing.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake?

Sar. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept;
For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them.
My father was amongst them, too; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,
And her, the homicide and husband-killer,
Whom you call glorious.

Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,
And charge once more the rebel crew, who still
Keep gathering head, repulsed, but not quite quell'd.

Sar. How wears the night?

Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness: use them for your further rest.

Sar. No, not to-night, if 'tis not gone: methought
I pass'd hours in that vision.

Myr. Scarcely one;
I watch'd by you: it was a heavy hour,
But an hour only.

Sar. Let us then hold council;
To-morrow we set forth.

Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek.

Sar. 'Tis granted.

Sal. Hear it
Ere you reply too readily; and 'tis
For *your* ear only.
Myr. Prince, I take my leave.
[*Exit* MYRRHA.
Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.
Sar. Freedom only!
That slave deserves to share a throne.
Sal. Your patience—
'Tis not yet vacant, and 'tis of its partner
I come to speak with you.
Sar. How! of the queen?
Sal. Even so. I judged it fitting for their safety,
That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children
For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta
Governs; and there at all events secure
My nephews and your sons their lives, and with them
Their just pretensions to the crown in case——
Sar. I perish—as is probable: well thought—
Let them set forth with a sure escort.
Sal. That
Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates;(1) but ere they
Depart, will you not see——
Sar. My sons? It may
Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep;
And what can I reply to comfort them,

(1) [We hardly know why Lord Byron, who has not in other respects shown a slavish deference for Diodorus Siculus, should thus follow him in the manifest geographical blunder of placing Nineveh on the *Euphrates* instead of the *Tigris*, in opposition not only to the uniform tradition of the East, but to the express assertions of Herodotus, Pliny, and Ptolemy.—BISHOP HEBER.]

Save with some hollow hopes, and ill-worn smiles?
You know I cannot feign.
Sal. But you can feel!
At least, I trust so: in a word, the queen
Requests to see you ere you part—for ever.
Sar. Unto what end? what purpose? I will grant
Aught—all that she can ask—but such a meeting.
Sal. You know, or ought to know, enough of women,
Since you have studied them so steadily,
That what they ask in aught that touches on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy, than the whole external world.
I think as you do of my sister's wish;
But 'twas her wish—she is my sister—you
Her husband—will you grant it?
Sar. 'Twill be useless:
But let her come.
Sal. I go. [*Exit* SALEMENES.
Sar. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again—and *now* to meet!
Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle sorrows,
Who have ceased to mingle love?

Re-enter SALEMENES *and* ZARINA.

Sal. My sister! Courage:
Shame not our blood with trembling, but remember
From whence we sprung. The queen is present, sire.
Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.
Sal. Since you ask it.
[*Exit* SALEMENES.

Zar. Alone with him! How many a year has pass'd,
Though we are still so young, since we have met,
Which I have worn in widowhood of heart.
He loved me not: yet he seems little changed—
Changed to me only — would the change were mutual!
He speaks not — scarce regards me — not a word—
Nor look — yet he *was* soft of voice and aspect,
Indifferent, not austere. My lord!
Sar. Zarina!
Zar. No, *not* Zarina — do not say Zarina.
That tone — that word — annihilate long years,
And things which make them longer.
Sar. 'Tis too late
To think of these past dreams. Let's not reproach—
That is, reproach me not — for the *last* time ——
Zar. And *first*. I ne'er reproach'd you.
Sar. 'Tis most true;
And that reproof comes heavier on my heart
Than ——But our hearts are not in our own power.
Zar. Nor hands; but I gave both.
Sar. Your brother said
It was your will to see me, ere you went
From Nineveh with —— (*He hesitates*).
Zar. Our children: it is true.
I wish'd to thank you that you have not divided
My heart from all that's left it now to love—
Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,
And look upon me as you look'd upon me
Once ——But they have not changed.
Sar. Nor ever will.
I fain would have them dutiful.

Zar. I cherish
Those infants, not alone from the blind love
Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman.
They are now the only tie between us.
Sar. Deem not
I have not done you justice: rather make them
Resemble your own line than their own sire.
I trust them with you—to you: fit them for
A throne, or, if that be denied——You have heard
Of this night's tumults?
Zar. I had half forgotten,
And could have welcomed any grief save yours,
Which gave me to behold your face again.
Sar. The throne—I say it not in fear—but 'tis
In peril; they perhaps may never mount it:
But let them not for this lose sight of it.
I will dare all things to bequeath it them;
But if I fail, then they must win it back
Bravely—and, won, wear it wisely, not as I
Have wasted down my royalty.
Zar. They ne'er
Shall know from me of aught but what may honour
Their father's memory.
Sar. Rather let them hear
The truth from you than from a trampling world.
If they be in adversity, they'll learn
Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless princes,
And find that all their father's sins are theirs.
My boys!—I could have borne it were I childless.
Zar. Oh! do not say so—do not poison all
My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert
A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,

And honour him who saved the realm for them,
So little cared for as his own; and if—— [father!
Sar. 'Tis lost, all earth will cry out thank your
And they will swell the echo with a curse.
Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honour
The name of him, who, dying like a king,
In his last hours did more for his own memory
Than many monarchs in a length of days,
Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.
Sar. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;
But at the least, whate'er the past, their end
Shall be like their beginning—memorable.
Zar. Yet, be not rash—be careful of your life,
Live but for those who love.
Sar. And who are they?
A slave, who loves from passion—I'll not say
Ambition—she has seen thrones shake, and loves;
A few friends who have revell'd till we are
As one, for they are nothing if I fall;
A brother I have injured—children whom
I have neglected, and a spouse——
Zar. Who loves.
Sar. And pardons?
Zar. I have never thought of this,
And cannot pardon till I have condemn'd.
Sar. My wife!
Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word!
I never thought to hear it more—from thee.
Sar. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects.
Yes—
These slaves whom I have nurtured, pamper'd, fed,
And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till

They reign themselves — all monarchs in their mansions—
Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand
His death, who made their lives a jubilee;
While the few upon whom I have no claim
Are faithful! This is true, yet monstrous.

Zar. 'Tis
Perhaps too natural; for benefits
Turn poison in bad minds.

Sar. And good ones make
Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,
Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.

Zar. Then reap
The honey, nor enquire whence 'tis derived.
Be satisfied — you are not all abandon'd. [you,

Sar. My life insures me that. How long, bethink
Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal;
That is, where mortals *are*, not where they must be?

Zar. I know not. But yet live for my — that is,
Your children's sake!

Sar. My gentle, wrong'd Zarina! (1)
I am the very slave of circumstance

(1) [We are not sure, whether there is not a considerable violation of costume in the sense of degradation with which Myrrha seems to regard her situation in the harem, no less than in the resentment of Salemenes, and the remorse of Sardanapalus on the score of his infidelity to Zarina. Little as we know of the domestic habits of Assyria, we have reason to conclude, from the habits of contemporary nations, and from the manners of the East in every age, that polygamy was neither accounted a crime in itself, nor as a measure of which the principal wife was justified in complaining. And even in Greece, in those times when Myrrha's character must have been formed, — to be a captive, and subject to the captor's pleasure, was accounted a misfortune indeed, but could hardly be regarded as an infamy. But where is the critic who would object to an inaccuracy which has given occasion to such sentiments and such poetry? — Bishop Heber.]

And impulse—borne away with every breath!
Misplaced upon the throne—misplaced in life.
I know not what I could have been, but feel
I am not what I should be—let it end.
But take this with thee: if I was not form'd
To prize a love like thine, a mind like thine,
Nor dote even on thy beauty—as I've doted
On lesser charms, for no cause save that such
Devotion was a duty, and I hated
All that look'd like a chain for me or others
(This even rebellion must avouch); yet hear
These words, perhaps among my last—that none
E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not
To profit by them—as the miner lights
Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering
That which avails him nothing: he hath found it,
But 'tis not his—but some superior's, who
Placed him to dig, but not divide the wealth
Which sparkles at his feet; nor dare he lift
Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning
The sullen earth.

Zar. Oh! if thou hast at length
Discover'd that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more—but let us hence together,
And *I*—let me say *we*—shall yet be happy.
Assyria is not all the earth—we'll find
A world out of our own—and be more bless'd
Than I have ever been, or thou, with all
An empire to indulge thee.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I must part ye—
The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.

Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out
Instants so high and blest?

Sal. Blest!

Zar. He hath been
So gentle with me, that I cannot think
Of quitting.

Sal. So—this feminine farewell
Ends as such partings end, in *no* departure.
I thought as much, and yielded against all
My better bodings. But it must not be.

Zar. Not be?

Sal. Remain, and perish——

Zar. With my husband——

Sal. And children.

Zar. Alas!

Sal. Hear me, sister, like
My sister:—all's prepared to make your safety
Certain, and of the boys too, our last hopes;
'Tis not a single question of mere feeling,
Though that were much—but 'tis a point of state:
The rebels would do more to seize upon
The offspring of their sovereign, and so crush——

Zar. Ah! do not name it.

Sal. Well, then, mark me: when
They are safe beyond the Median's grasp, the rebels
Have miss'd their chief aim—the extinction of
The line of Nimrod. Though the present king
Fall, his sons live for victory and vengeance.

Zar. But could not I remain, alone?
Sal. What! leave
Your children, with two parents and yet orphans—
In a strange land—so young, so distant?
Zar. No—
My heart will break.
Sal. Now you know all—decide.
Sar. Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we
Must yield awhile to this necessity.
Remaining here, you may lose all; departing,
You save the better part of what is left,
To both of us, and to such loyal hearts
As yet beat in these kingdoms.
Sal. The time presses.
Sar. Go, then. If e'er we meet again, perhaps
I may be worthier of you—and, if not,
Remember that my faults, though not atoned for,
Are *ended*. Yet, I dread thy nature will
Grieve more above the blighted name and ashes
Which once were mightiest in Assyria—than——
But I grow womanish again, and must not;
I must learn sternness now. My sins have all
Been of the softer order——*hide* thy tears—
I do not bid thee *not* to shed them—'twere
Easier to stop Euphrates at its source
Than one tear of a true and tender heart—
But let me not behold them; they unman me
Here when I had remann'd myself. My brother,
Lead her away.
Zar. Oh, God! I never shall
Behold him more! [obey'd.
Sal. (*striving to conduct her*). Nay, sister, I *must* be

Zar. I must remain—away! you shall not hold me.
What, shall he die alone?—*I* live alone?
Sal. He shall *not die alone;* but lonely you
Have lived for years.
Zar. That's false! I knew *he* lived,
And lived upon his image—let me go!
Sal. (*conducting her off the stage*). Nay, then, I must use some fraternal force,
Which you will pardon.
Zar. Never. Help me! Oh!
Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
Torn from thee?
Sal. Nay—then all is lost again,
If that this moment is not gain'd.
Zar. My brain turns—
My eyes fail—where is he? [*She faints.*
Sar. (*advancing*). No—set her down—
She's dead—and you have slain her.
Sal. 'Tis the mere
Faintness of o'erwrought passion: in the air
She will recover. Pray, keep back.—[*Aside.*] I must
Avail myself of this sole moment to
Bear her to where her children are embark'd,
I' the royal galley on the river.
[SALEMENES *bears her off.* (1)

(1) [This scene has been, we know not why, called "useless," "unnatural," and "tediously written."* For ourselves, we are not ashamed to own that we have read it with emotion. It is an interview between Sardanapalus and his neglected wife, whom, with her children, he is about to send to a place of safety. Here, too, however, he is represented, with much poetical art and justice of delineation, as, in the midst of his deepest regrets for Zarina, chiefly engrossed with himself and his own sorrows, and inclined, immediately afterwards, to visit on poor Myrrha the painful feelings which his own reproaches of himself have occasioned.—HEBER.]

* [These expressions occurred in the Edinburgh Review.—E.]

Sar. (*solus*). This, too—
And this too must I suffer—I, who never
Inflicted purposely on human hearts
A voluntary pang! But that is false—
She loved me, and I loved her.—Fatal passion!
Why dost thou not expire *at once* in hearts
Which thou hast lighted up at once? Zarina!
I must pay dearly for the desolation
Now brought upon thee. Had I never loved
But thee, I should have been an unopposed
Monarch of honouring nations. To what gulfs
A single deviation from the track
Of human duties leads even those who claim
The homage of mankind as their born due,
And find it, till they forfeit it themselves!

Enter MYRRHA.

Sar. *You* here! Who call'd you?
Myr. No one—but I heard
Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,
And thought——
Sar. It forms no portion of your duties
To enter here till sought for.
Myr. Though I might,
Perhaps, recal some softer words of yours
(Although they *too were chiding*), which reproved me,
Because I ever dreaded to intrude;
Resisting my own wish and your injunction
To heed no time nor presence, but approach you
Uncall'd for:—I retire.
Sar. Yet stay—being here.
I pray you pardon me: events have sour'd me

Till I wax peevish—heed it not: I shall
Soon be myself again.
Myr. I wait with patience,
What I shall see with pleasure.
Sar. Scarce a moment
Before your entrance in this hall, Zarina,
Queen of Assyria, departed hence.
Myr. Ah!
Sar. Wherefore do you start?
Myr. Did I do so?
Sar. 'Twas well you enter'd by another portal,
Else you had met. That pang at least is spared her!
Myr. I know to feel for her.
Sar. That is too much,
And beyond nature—'tis nor mutual (1)
Nor possible. You cannot pity her,
Nor she aught but——
Myr. Despise the favourite slave?
Not more than I have ever scorn'd myself.
Sar. Scorn'd! what, to be the envy of your sex,
And lord it o'er the heart of the world's lord?
Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten thousand worlds—
As you are like to lose the one you sway'd—
I did abase myself as much in being
Your paramour, as though you were a peasant—
Nay, more, if that the peasant were a Greek.
Sar. You talk it well——
Myr. And truly.

(1) [For *mutual*, the MS. in our hands has *natural*; but we are not *quite* sure that there has been merely a misprint in the foregoing editions. —E.]

Sar. In the hour
Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling; but as I am not
Quite fall'n, nor now disposed to bear reproaches,
Perhaps because I merit them too often,
Let us then part while peace is still between us.
Myr. Part!
Sar. Have not all past human beings parted,
And must not all the present one day part?
Myr. Why?
Sar. For your safety, which I will have look'd to,
With a strong escort to your native land;
And such gifts, as, if you had not been all
A queen, shall make your dowry worth a kingdom.
Myr. I pray you talk not thus.
Sar. The queen is gone:
You need not shame to follow. I would fall
Alone—I seek no partners but in pleasure.
Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting not.
You shall not force me from you.
Sar. Think well of it—
It soon may be too late.
Myr. So let it be;
For then you cannot separate me from you.
Sar. And will not; but I thought you wish'd it.
Myr. I!
Sar. You spoke of your abasement.
Myr. And I feel it
Deeply—more deeply than all things but love.
Sar. Then fly from it.
Myr. 'Twill not recal the past—
'Twill not restore my honour, nor my heart.

No—here I stand or fall. If that you conquer,
I live to joy in your great triumph: should
Your lot be different, I'll not weep, but share it.
You did not doubt me a few hours ago.

Sar. Your courage never—nor your love till now;
And none could make me doubt it save yourself.
Those words——

Myr. Were words. I pray you, let the proofs
Be in the past acts you were pleased to praise
This very night, and in my further bearing,
Beside, wherever you are borne by fate.

Sar. I am content: and, trusting in my cause,
Think we may yet be victors and return
To peace—the only victory I covet.
To me war is no glory—conquest no
Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. Never, never
Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others.
I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the future would turn back and smile,
And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recal Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
I took the rabble's shouts for love—the breath
Of friends for truth—the lips of woman for
My only guerdon—so they are, my Myrrha:

[*He kisses her.*

Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and life!
They shall have both, but never thee!
Myr. No, never!
Man may despoil his brother man of all
That's great or glittering—kingdoms fall—hosts yield—
Friends fail—slaves fly—and all betray—and, more
Than all, the most indebted—but a heart
That loves without self-love! 'Tis here—now prove it.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I sought you—How! *she* here again?
Sar. Return not
Now to reproof: methinks your aspect speaks
Of higher matter than a woman's presence.
Sal. The only woman whom it much imports me
At such a moment now is safe in absence—
The queen's embark'd.
Sar. And well? say that much.
Sal. Yes.
Her transient weakness has pass'd o'er; at least,
It settled into tearless silence: her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fix'd
Upon the palace towers as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath the starlight;
But she said nothing.
Sar. Would I felt no more
Than she has said!
Sal. 'Tis now too late to feel!

Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang:
To change them, my advices bring sure tidings
That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees, marshall'd
By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again; and, serrying their ranks,
Prepare to attack: they have apparently
Been join'd by other satraps.

Sar. What! more rebels?
Let us be first, then.

Sal. That were hardly prudent
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are join'd by those
I've sent for by sure messengers, we shall be
In strength enough to venture an attack,
Ay, and pursuit too; but till then, my voice
Is to await the onset.

Sar. I detest
That waiting; though it seems so safe to fight
Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on spikes
Strew'd to receive them, still I like it not—
My soul seems lukewarm; but when I set on them,
Though they were piled on mountains, I would have
A pluck at them, or perish in hot blood!—
Let me then charge.

Sal. You talk like a young soldier.

Sar. I am no soldier, but a man: speak not
Of soldiership, I loathe the word, and those
Who pride themselves upon it; but direct me
Where I may pour upon them.

Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily; 'tis not

Like mine or any other subject's breath:
The whole war turns upon it—with it; this
Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench it—
Prolong it—end it.

Sar. Then let us end both!
'Twere better thus, perhaps, than prolong either;
I'm sick of one, perchance of both.

[*A trumpet sounds without.*

Sal. Hark!

Sar. Let us
Reply, not listen.

Sal. And your wound!

Sar. 'Tis bound—
'Tis heal'd—I had forgotten it. Away!
A leech's lancet would have scratch'd me deeper;(1)
The slave that gave it might be well ashamed
To have struck so weakly.

Sal. Now, may none this hour
Strike with a better aim!

Sar. Ay, if we conquer;
But if not, they will only leave to me
A task they might have spared their king. Upon
them! [*Trumpet sounds again.*

Sal. I am with you.

Sar. Ho, my arms! again, my arms!

[*Exeunt.*

(1) [MS.—"A leech's lancet would have done as much."]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same Hall in the Palace.

MYRRHA *and* BALEA.

Myr. (*at a window*). The day at last has broken.
What a night
Hath usher'd it! How beautiful in heaven!
Though varied with a transitory storm,
More beautiful in that variety!
How hideous upon earth! where peace and hope,
And love and revel, in an hour were trampled
By human passions to a human chaos,
Not yet resolved to separate elements—
'Tis warring still! And can the sun so rise,
So bright, so rolling back the clouds into
Vapours more lovely than the unclouded sky,
With golden pinnacles, and snowy mountains,
And billows purpler than the ocean's, making
In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,
So like we almost deem it permanent;
So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught
Beyond a vision, 'tis so transiently
Scatter'd along the eternal vault: (1) and yet

(1) [This description of the sun rolling back the vapours is apparently imitated from a magnificent scene in the second book of Wordsworth's Excursion: —

——— "Round them and above,
Glitter, with dark recesses interposed
Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
Half-veil'd in vapouring cloud, the silver steam
Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten."]

It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
And blends itself into the soul, until
Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
Of sorrow and of love; which they who mark not,
Know not the realms where those twin genii (1)
(Who chasten and who purify our hearts,
So that we would not change their sweet rebukes
For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
The air with clamour) build the palaces
Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
Briefly;—but in that brief cool calm inhale
Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
And dream them through in placid sufferance;
Though seemingly employ'd like all the rest
Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks (2)
Of pain or pleasure, *two* names for *one* feeling,
Which our internal, restless agony
Would vary in the sound, although the sense
Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.

Bal. You muse right calmly: and can you so watch
The sunrise which may be our last?

Myr. It is
Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
For having look'd upon it oft, too oft,
Without reverence and the rapture due

(1) [MS.—"Sunrise and sunset form the epoch of
Sorrow and love; and they who mark them not
Can ne'er hold converse with," &c.]

(2) [MS.—"Of labouring wretches in allotted tasks."]

To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's god, which, when I gaze upon,
I grow almost a convert to your Baal.

Bal. As now he reigns in heaven, so once on earth
He sway'd.

Myr. He sways it now far more, then; never
Had earthly monarch half the power and glory (1)
Which centres in a single ray of his.

Bal. Surely he is a god!

Myr. So we Greeks deem too;
And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous orb
Must rather be the abode of gods than one
Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he breaks
Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes with light
That shuts the world out. I can look no more.

Bal. Hark! heard you not a sound?

Myr. No, 'twas mere fancy;
They battle it beyond the wall, and not
As in late midnight conflict in the very
Chambers: the palace has become a fortress
Since that insidious hour; and here, within
The very centre, girded by vast courts
And regal halls of pyramid proportions,
Which must be carried one by one before
They penetrate to where they then arrived,
We are as much shut in even from the sound
Of peril as from glory.

Bal. But they reach'd
Thus far before.

(1) [Misprinted hitherto—
"*Had earthly monarch half the peace* and glory."—E.]

Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were
Beat back by valour: now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.
Bal. May they
Prosper!
Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more: it is an anxious hour;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas!
How vainly!
Bal. It is said the king's demeanour
In the late action scarcely more appall'd
The rebels than astonish'd his true subjects.
Myr. 'Tis easy to astonish or appal
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of slaves;
But he did bravely.
Bal. Slew he not Beleses?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him down.
Myr. The wretch was overthrown, but rescued to
Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who vanquish'd him
In fight, as he had spared him in his peril;
And by that heedless pity risk'd a crown.
Bal. Hark! [slowly.
Myr. You are right; some steps approach, but

Enter Soldiers, bearing in SALEMENES *wounded, with a broken Javelin in his Side: they seat him upon one of the Couches which furnish the Apartment.*

Myr. Oh, Jove!
Bal. Then all is over.
Sal. That is false.
Hew down the slave who says so, if a soldier.

Myr. Spare him — he's none: a mere court butterfly,
That flutters in the pageant of a monarch.
Sal. Let him live on, then.
Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.
Sal. I fain would live this hour out, and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me here?
Sol. By the king's order. When the javelin struck you,
You fell and fainted: 'twas his strict command
To bear you to this hall.
Sal. 'Twas not ill done:
For seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,
The sight might shake our soldiers — but — 'tis vain,
I feel it ebbing!
Myr. Let me see the wound;
I am not quite skilless: in my native land
'Tis part of our instruction. War being constant,
We are nerved to look on such things. (1)
Sol. Best extract
The javelin.
Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.
Sal. I am sped, then!
Myr. With the blood that fast must follow
The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.
Sal. And I *not* death. Where was the king when you
Convey'd me from the spot where I was stricken?
Sol. Upon the same ground, and encouraging
With voice and gesture the dispirited troops
Who had seen you fall, and falter'd back.

(1) [MS. — "We are used to such inflictions."]

Sal. Whom heard ye
Named next to the command?
Sol. I did not hear.
Sal. Fly, then, and tell him, 'twas my last request
That Zames take my post until the junction,
So hoped for, yet delay'd, of Ofratanes,
Satrap of Susa. Leave me here: our troops
Are not so numerous as to spare your absence.
Sol. But prince ——
Sal. Hence, I say! Here's a courtier and
A woman, the best chamber company.
As you would not permit me to expire
Upon the field, I'll have no idle soldiers
About my sick couch. Hence! and do my bidding!
[*Exeunt the Soldiers.*
Myr. Gallant and glorious spirit! must the earth
So soon resign thee?
Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 'tis
The end I would have chosen, had I saved
The monarch or the monarchy by this;
As 'tis, I have not outlived them.
Myr. You wax paler.
Sal. Your hand; this broken weapon but prolongs
My pangs, without sustaining life enough
To make me useful: I would draw it forth
And my life with it, could I but hear how
The fight goes.

Enter SARDANAPALUS *and Soldiers.*

Sar. My best brother!
Sal. And the battle
Is lost?

Sar. (*despondingly*). You see *me here.*

Sal. I'd rather see you *thus!*

[*He draws out the weapon from the wound, and dies.*

Sar. And *thus* I will be seen; unless the succour,
The last frail reed of our beleaguer'd hopes,
Arrive with Ofratanes.

Myr. Did you not
Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief?

Sar. I did.

Myr. Where's Zames?

Sar. Dead.

Myr. And Altada?

Sar. Dying.

Myr. Pania? Sfero?

Sar. Pania yet lives; but Sfero's fled or captive.
I am alone.

Myr. And is all lost?

Sar. Our walls,
Though thinly mann'd, may still hold out against
Their present force, or aught save treachery:
But i' the field——

Myr. I thought 'twas the intent
Of Salemenes not to risk a sally
Till ye were strengthen'd by the expected succours.

Sar. *I* over-ruled him.

Myr. Well, the fault's a brave one.

Sar. But fatal. Oh, my brother! I would give
These realms, of which thou wert the ornament,
The sword and shield, the sole-redeeming honour,
To call back——But I will not weep for thee;

Thou shalt be mourn'd for as thou wouldst be mourn'd.
It grieves me most that thou couldst quit this life
Believing that I could survive what thou
Hast died for—our long royalty of race.
If I redeem it, I will give thee blood
Of thousands, tears of millions, for atonement
(The tears of all the good are thine already).
If not, we meet again soon,—if the spirit
Within us lives beyond:—thou readest mine,
And dost me justice now. Let me once clasp
That yet warm hand, and fold that throbless heart
[*Embraces the body.*
To this which beats so bitterly. Now, bear
The body hence.

Soldier. Where?

Sar. To my proper chamber.
Place it beneath my canopy, as though
The king lay there: when this is done, we will
Speak further of the rites due to such ashes.

[*Exeunt Soldiers with the body of* SALEMENES.

Enter PANIA.

Sar. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards, and issued
The orders fix'd on?

Pan. Sire, I have obey'd.

Sar. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?

Pan. Sire?

Sar. I'm answer'd! When a king asks twice, and has
A question as an answer to *his* question,
It is a portent. What! they are dishearten'd?

Pan. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts
Of the exulting rebels on his fall,
Have made them ——

Sar. *Rage*—not droop—it should have been.
We'll find the means to rouse them.

Pan. Such a loss
Might sadden even a victory.

Sar. Alas!
Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet, [and we
Though coop'd within these walls, they are strong,
Have those without will break their way through hosts,
To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was—
A palace; not a prison, nor a fortress.

Enter an Officer, hastily.

Sar. Thy face seems ominous. Speak!

Offi. I dare not.

Sar. Dare not?
While millions dare revolt with sword in hand!
That's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence
Which loathes to shock its sovereign; we can hear
Worse than thou hast to tell.

Pan. Proceed, thou hearest.

Offi. The wall which skirted near the river's brink
Is thrown down by the sudden inundation
Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln
From the enormous mountains where it rises,
By the late rains of that tempestuous region,
O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroy'd the bulwark.

Pan. That's a black augury! it has been said
For ages, "That the city ne'er should yield
"To man, until the river grew its foe."

Sar. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.
How much is swept down of the wall?
Offi. About
Some twenty stadii. (1)
Sar. And all this is left
Pervious to the assailants?
Offi. For the present
The river's fury must impede the assault;
But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,
And may be cross'd by the accustom'd barks,
The palace is their own.
Sar. That shall be never.
Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,
Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provoked them,
My father's house shall never be a cave
For wolves to horde and howl in.
Pan. With your sanction,
I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures
For the assurance of the vacant space
As time and means permit.
Sar. About it straight,
And bring me back, as speedily as full
And fair investigation may permit,
Report of the true state of this irruption
Of waters. [*Exeunt* PANIA *and the Officer.*
Myr. Thus the very waves rise up
Against you.
Sar. They are not my subjects, girl,
And may be pardon'd, since they can't be punish'd.
Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.

(1) About two miles and a half.

Sar. I am past the fear of portents: they can tell me
Nothing I have not told myself since midnight:
Despair anticipates such things.

Myr. Despair!

Sar. No; not despair precisely. When we know
All that can come, and how to meet it, our
Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble
Word than this is to give it utterance.
But what are words to us? we have well nigh done
With them and all things.

Myr. Save *one deed*—the last
And greatest to all mortals; crowning act
Of all that was—or is—or is to be—
The only thing common to all mankind,
So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects, (1)
Without one point of union save in this,
To which we tend, for which we're born, and thread
The labyrinth of mystery, call'd life.

Sar. Our clew being well nigh wound out, let's be cheerful.
They who have nothing more to fear may well
Indulge a smile at that which once appall'd;
As children at discover'd bugbears.

Re-enter PANIA.

Pan. 'Tis
As was reported: I have order'd there
A double guard, withdrawing from the wall
Where it was strongest the required addition
To watch the breach occasion'd by the waters.

(1) [MS.—"Complexions, climes, eras, and intellects."]

Sar. You have done your duty faithfully, and as
My worthy Pania! further ties between us
Draw near a close. I pray you take this key:
[*Gives a key.*
It opens to a secret chamber, placed
Behind the couch in my own chamber. (Now
Press'd by a nobler weight than e'er it bore—
Though a long line of sovereigns have lain down
Along its golden frame—as bearing for
A time what late was Salemenes). Search
The secret covert to which this will lead you;
'Tis full of treasure; (1) take it for yourself
And your companions: there's enough to load ye
Though ye be many. (2) Let the slaves be freed, too;
And all the inmates of the palace, of
Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour. [pleasure,
Thence launch the regal barks, once form'd for
And now to serve for safety, and embark.
The river's broad and swoln, and uncommanded
(More potent than a king) by these besiegers.
Fly! and be happy!

Pan. Under your protection!
So you accompany your faithful guard.

Sar. No, Pania! that must not be; get thee hence,
And leave me to my fate.

(1) ["Athenæus makes these treasures amount to a thousand myriads of talents of gold, and ten times as many talents of silver, which is a sum that exceeds all credibility. A man is lost if he attempts to sum up the whole value; which induces me to believe, that Athenæus must have very much exaggerated; however, we may be assured, from his account, that the treasures were immensely great."—ROLLIN.]

(2) [MS. —— "Ye will find the crevice
To which the key fits, with a little care."]

Pan. 'Tis the first time
I ever disobey'd: but now——
Sar. So all men
Dare beard me now, and Insolence within
Apes Treason from without. Question no further;
'Tis my command, my last command. Wilt *thou*
Oppose it? *thou!*
Pan. But yet—not yet.
Sar. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.
Pan. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.
Sar. 'Tis enough. Now order here
Faggots, pine-nuts, and wither'd leaves, and such (1)
Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole spark;
Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and spices,
And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile;
Bring frankincense and myrrh, too, for it is
For a great sacrifice I build the pyre;
And heap them round yon throne.
Pan. My lord!
Sar. I have said it,
And *you* have *sworn*.
Pan. And could keep my faith
Without a vow. [*Exit* PANIA.
Myr. What mean you?
Sar. You shall know
Anon—what the whole earth shall ne'er forget.

(1) [MS. —— "Now order here
Enough of dry wood," &c.]

PANIA, *returning with a Herald.*

Pan. My king, in going forth upon my duty,
This herald has been brought before me, craving
An audience.

Sar. Let him speak.

Her. The *King* Arbaces ——

Sar. What, crown'd already? — But, proceed.

Her. Beleses,
The anointed high-priest ——

Sar. Of what god or demon?
With new kings rise new altars. But, proceed;
You are sent to prate your master's will, and not
Reply to mine.

Her. And Satrap Ofratanes ——

Sar. Why, *he* is *ours.*

Her. (*showing a ring.*) Be sure that he is now
In the camp of the conquerors; behold
His signet ring.

Sar. 'Tis his. A worthy triad!
Poor Salemenes! thou hast died in time
To see one treachery the less: this man
Was thy true friend and my most trusted subject.
Proceed.

Her. They offer thee thy life, and freedom
Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,
Guarded and watch'd, but not confined in person,
Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace; but on
Condition that the three young princes are
Given up as hostages.

Sar. (*ironically*). The generous victors!

Her. I wait the answer.
Sar. Answer, slave! How long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?
Her. Since they were free.
Sar. Mouthpiece of mutiny!
Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty
Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania!
Let his head be thrown from our walls within
The rebels' lines, his carcass down the river.
Away with him!
[PANIA *and the Guards seizing him.*
Pan. I never yet obey'd
Your orders with more pleasure than the present.
Hence with him, soldiers! do not soil this hall
Of royalty with treasonable gore;
Put him to rest without.
Her. A single word:
My office, king, is sacred.
Sar. And what's *mine?*
That thou shouldst come and dare to ask of me
To lay it down?
Her. I but obey'd my orders,
At the same peril if refused, as now
Incurr'd by my obedience.
Sar. So there are
New monarchs of an hour's growth as despotic
As sovereigns swathed in purple, and enthroned
From birth to manhood!
Her. My life waits your breath.
Yours (I speak humbly)—but it may be—yours
May also be in danger scarce less imminent:
Would it then suit the last hours of a line

Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy
A peaceful herald, unarm'd, in his office;
And violate not only all that man
Holds sacred between man and man—but that
More holy tie which links us with the gods? [act
Sar. He's right.—Let him go free.—My life's last
Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow, take
[*Gives him a golden cup from a table near.*
This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,
And think of *me;* or melt it into ingots,
And think of nothing but their weight and value.
Her. I thank you doubly for my life, and this
Most gorgeous gift, which renders it more precious.
But must I bear no answer?
Sar. Yes,—I ask
An hour's truce to consider.
Her. But an hour's?
Sar. An hour's: if at the expiration of
That time your masters hear no further from me,
They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act befittingly.
Her. I shall not fail
To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.
Sar. And hark! a word more.
Her. I shall not forget it,
Whate'er it be.
Sar. Commend me to Beleses;
And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon
Him hence to meet me.
Her. Where?
Sar. At Babylon.
At least from thence he will depart to meet me.

Her. I shall obey you to the letter. [*Exit Herald.*
Sar. Pania!—
Now, my good Pania!—quick—with what I order'd.
Pan. My lord,—the soldiers are already charged.
And see! they enter.
[*Soldiers enter, and form a Pile about the Throne, &c.*
Sar. Higher, my good soldiers,
And thicker yet; and see that the foundation
Be such as will not speedily exhaust
Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be quench'd
With aught officious aid would bring to quell it.
Let the throne form the *core* of it; I would not
Leave that, save fraught with fire unquenchable,
To the new comers. Frame the whole as if
'Twere to enkindle the strong tower of our
Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an aspect!
How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice
For a king's obsequies?
Pan. Ay, for a kingdom's.
I understand you, now.
Sar. And blame me?
Pan. No—
Let me but fire the pile, and share it with you.
Myr. That duty's mine.
Pan. A woman's!
Myr. 'Tis the soldier's
Part to die *for* his sovereign, and why not
The woman's with her lover?
Pan. 'Tis most strange!
Myr. But not so rare, my Pania, as thou think'st it.
In the mean time, live thou.—Farewell! the pile
Is ready.

Pan. I should shame to leave my sovereign
With but a single female to partake
His death.
Sar. Too many far have heralded
Me to the dust, already. Get thee hence;
Enrich thee.
Pan. And live wretched!
Sar. Think upon
Thy vow:—'tis sacred and irrevocable.
Pan. Since it is so, farewell.
Sar. Search well my chamber,
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold;
Remember, what you leave you leave the slaves
Who slew me: and when you have borne away
All safe off to your boats, blow one long blast
Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.
The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then fly,—
And as you sail, turn back; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates: if you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say, what you *saw* at parting, and request
That she remember what I *said* at one
Parting more mournful still.
Pan. That royal hand!
Let me then once more press it to my lips;
And these poor soldiers who throng round you, and
Would fain die with you!

[*The Soldiers and* PANIA *throng round him, kissing his hand and the hem of his robe.*

Sar. My best! my last friends!
Let's not unman each other: part at once:
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy: trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied; or far more for what
Is past than present;—for the future, 'tis
In the hands of the deities, if such
There be: I shall know soon. Farewell—Farewell.

[*Exeunt* PANIA *and Soldiers.*

Myr. These men were honest: it is comfort still
That our last looks should be on loving faces.

Sar. And *lovely* ones, my beautiful!—but hear me!
If at this moment,—for we now are on
The brink,—thou feel'st an inward shrinking from
This leap through flame into the future, say it:
I shall not love thee less; nay, perhaps more,
For yielding to thy nature: and there's time
Yet for thee to escape hence.

Myr. Shall I light
One of the torches which lie heap'd beneath
The ever-burning lamp that burns without,
Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall?

Sar. Do so. Is that thy answer?

Myr. Thou shalt see.

[*Exit* MYRRHA.

Sar. (*solus*). She's firm. My fathers! whom I will rejoin,
It may be, purified by death from some
Of the gross stains of too material being,
I would not leave your ancient first abode

To the defilement of usurping bondmen;
If I have not kept your inheritance
As ye bequeath'd it, this bright part of it,
Your treasure, your abode, your sacred relics
Of arms, and records, monuments, and spoils,
In which *they* would have revell'd, I bear with me
To you in that absorbing element,
Which most personifies the soul as leaving
The least of matter unconsumed before
Its fiery workings:—and the light of this
Most royal of funereal pyres shall be
Not a mere pillar form'd of cloud and flame,
A beacon in the horizon for a day,
And then a mount of ashes, but a light
To lesson ages, rebel nations, and
Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench full many
A people's records, and a hero's acts;
Sweep empire after empire, like this first
Of empires, into nothing; but even then
Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
A problem few dare imitate, and none
Despise—but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.

MYRRHA *returns with a lighted Torch in one Hand, and a Cup in the other.*

Myr. Lo!
I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.
Sar. And the cup?
Myr. 'Tis my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.
Sar. And mine

To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.

[SARDANAPALUS *takes the cup, and after drinking and tinkling the reversed cup, as a drop falls, exclaims*—

And this libation
Is for the excellent Beleses.

Myr. Why
Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's name
Than on his mate's in villany?

Sar. The other
Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the other
Is master-mover of his warlike puppet:
But I dismiss them from my mind.—Yet pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?

Myr. And dost thou think
A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
An Indian widow braves for custom? (1)

Sar. Then
We but await the signal.

Myr. It is long
In sounding.

Sar. Now, farewell; one last embrace.

Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last; there is one more.

Sar. True, the commingling fire will mix our ashes.

(1) [MS. —— "And what is there
An Indian widow dares for custom which
A Greek girl dare not do for love?"]

Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.
Sar. Say it.
Myr. It is that no kind hand will gather
The dust of both into one urn.
Sar. The better:
Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scatter'd into air,
Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing palace,
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
Hath piled in her brick mountains, o'er dead kings, (1)
Or *kine*, for none know whether those proud piles
Be for their monarch, or their ox-god Apis:
So much for monuments that have forgotten
Their very record! (2)
Myr. Then farewell, thou earth!
And loveliest spot of earth! farewell, Ionia!

(1) [These lines are in bad taste enough, from the jingle between *kings* and *kine*, down to the absurdity of believing that Sardanapalus at such a moment would be likely to discuss a point of antiquarian curiosity. But they involve also an anachronism, inasmuch as, whatever date be assigned to the erection of the earlier pyramids, there can be no reason for apprehending that, at the fall of Nineveh, and while the kingdom and hierarchy of Egypt subsisted in their full splendour, the destination of those immense fabrics could have been a matter of doubt to any who might enquire concerning them. Herodotus, three hundred years later, may have been misinformed of these points; but, when Sardanapalus lived, the erection of pyramids must, in all probability, have not been still of unfrequent occurrence, and the nature of their contents no subject of mistake or mystery. — BISHOP HEBER.]

(2) [Here an anonymous critic suspects Lord Byron of having read old Fuller, who says, in his quaint way, "the pyramids, doting with age, have forgotten the names of their founders." — E.]

Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
Aloof from desolation! My last prayer
Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of thee!

Sar. And that?

Myr. Is yours.

[*The trumpet of* PANIA *sounds without.*

Sar. Hark!

Myr. *Now!*

Sar. Adieu, Assyria!
I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.
I sated thee with peace and joys; and this
Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,
Not even a grave. [*He mounts the pile.*
Now, Myrrha!

Myr. Art thou ready?

Sar. As the torch in thy grasp.

[MYRRHA *fires the pile.*

Myr. 'Tis fired! I come.

[*As* MYRRHA *springs forward to throw herself into the flames, the Curtain falls.* (1)

(1) [In "Sardanapalus" Lord Byron has been far more fortunate than in the "Doge of Venice," inasmuch as his subject is one eminently adapted not only to tragedy in general, but to that peculiar kind of tragedy which Lord Byron is anxious to recommend. The history of the last of the Assyrian kings is at once sufficiently well known to awaken that previous interest which belongs to illustrious names and early associations; and sufficiently remote and obscure to admit of any modification of incident or character which a poet may find convenient. All that we know of Nineveh and its sovereigns is majestic, indistinct, and mysterious. We read of an extensive and civilised monarchy erected in the ages immediately succeeding the deluge, and existing in full might and majesty while the shores of Greece and Italy were unoccupied, except by roving savages. We read of an empire whose influence extended from Samarcand to Troy, and from the mountains of Judah to those of Caucasus, subverted, after a continu-

ance of thirteen hundred years, and a dynasty of thirty generations, in an almost incredibly short space of time, less by the revolt of two provinces than by the anger of Heaven and the predicted fury of natural and inanimate agents. And the influence which both the conquests and the misfortunes of Assyria appear to have exerted over the fates of the people for whom, of all others in ancient history, our strongest feelings are (from religious motives) interested, throws a sort of sacred pomp over the greatness and the crimes of the descendants of Nimrod, and a reverence which no other equally remote portion of profane history is likely to obtain with us. At the same time, all which we know is so brief, so general, and so disjointed, that we have few of those preconceived notions of the persons and facts represented which in classical dramas, if servilely followed, destroy the interest, and if rashly departed from offend the prejudices, of the reader or the auditor. An outline is given of the most majestic kind; but it is an outline only, which the poet may fill up at pleasure; and in ascribing, as Lord Byron has done for the sake of his favourite unities, the destruction of the Assyrian empire to the treason of one night, instead of the war of several years, he has neither shocked our better knowledge, nor incurred any conspicuous improbability.... Still, however, the developement of Sardanapalus's character is incidental only to the plot of Lord Byron's drama, and though the unities have confined his picture within far narrower limits than he might otherwise have thought advisable, the character is admirably sketched; nor is there any one of the portraits of this great master which gives us a more favourable opinion of his talents, his force of conception, his delicacy and vigour of touch, or the richness and harmony of his colouring. He had, indeed, no unfavourable groundwork, even in the few hints supplied by the ancient historians, as to the conduct and history of the last and most unfortunate of the line of Belus. Though accused (whether truly or falsely), by his triumphant enemies, of the most revolting vices, and an effeminacy even beyond what might be expected from the last dregs of Asiatic despotism, we find Sardanapalus, when roused by the approach of danger, conducting his armies with a courage, a skill, and, for some time at least, with a success not inferior to those of his most warlike ancestors. We find him retaining to the last the fidelity of his most trusted servants, his nearest kindred, and no small proportion of his hardiest subjects. We see him providing for the safety of his wife, his children, and his capital city, with all the calmness and prudence of an experienced captain. We see him at length subdued, not by man, but by Heaven and the elements, and seeking his death with a mixture of heroism and ferocity which little accords with our notions of a weak or utterly degraded character. And even the strange story, variously told, and without further explanation scarcely intelligible, which represents him as building (or fortifying) two cities in a single day, and then deforming his exploits with an indecent image and inscription, would seem to imply a mixture of energy with his folly not impossible, perhaps, to the madness of absolute power, and which may lead us to impute his fall less to weakness than to an injudicious and ostentatious contempt of the

opinions and prejudices of mankind. Such a character, — luxurious, energetic, misanthropical, — affords, beyond a doubt, no common advantages to the work of poetic delineation; and it is precisely the character which Lord Byron most delights to draw, and which he has succeeded best in drawing. — BISHOP HEBER.

I remember Lord Byron's mentioning, that the story of Sardanapalus had been working in his brain for seven years before he commenced it. — TRELAWNEY.]

THE TWO FOSCARI.

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY. (1)

The *father* softens, but the *governor*'s resolved. — Critic.

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(1) [MS. — "Begun June the 12th, completed July the 9th, Ravenna, 1821. — *Byron.*"]

[" THE TWO FOSCARI" was composed at Ravenna, between the 11th of June and the 10th of July, 1821, and published with " Sardanapalus" in the following December. " The Venetian story," writes Lord Byron to Mr. Murray, " is strictly historical. I am much mortified that Gifford don't take to my new dramas. To be sure, they are as opposite to the English drama as one thing can be to another; but I have a notion that, if understood, they will, in time, find favour (though *not* on the stage) with the reader. The simplicity of plot is intentional, and the avoidance of *rant* also, as also the compression of the speeches in the more severe situations. What I seek to show in 'the Foscaris' is the *suppressed* passions, rather than the rant of the present day. For that matter —

> 'Nay, if thoul't mouth,
> I'll rant as well as thou —'

would not be difficult, as I think I have shown in my younger productions — *not dramatic* ones, to be sure." The best English account of the incidents on which this play is founded, is in the second volume of the Reverend Mr. Smedley's " Sketches of Venetian History: " —

" The reign of Francesco Foscari had now been prolonged to the unusual period of thirty-four years, and these years were marked by almost continual warfare; during which, however, the courage, the firmness, and the sagacity of the illustrious Doge had won four rich provinces for his country, and increased her glory not less than her dominion. Ardent, enterprising, and ambitious of the glory of conquest, it was not without much opposition that Foscari had obtained the Dogeship; and he soon discovered that the throne which he had coveted with so great earnestness was far from being a seat of repose. Accordingly, at the peace of Ferrara, which in 1433 succeeded a calamitous war, foreseeing the approach of fresh and still greater troubles, and wearied by the factions which ascribed all disasters to the Prince, he tendered his abdication to the senate, and was refused. A like offer was renewed by him when nine years' further experience of sovereignty had confirmed his former estimate of its cares; and the Council, on this second occasion, much more from adherence to existing institutions than from any attachment to the person of the Doge accompanied their negative with the exaction of an oath that he would retain his burdensome dignity for life. Too early, alas! was he to be taught that life, on such conditions, was the heaviest of curses! Three out of his four sons were already dead: to Giacopo, the survivor, he looked

for the continuation of his name and the support of his declining age; and, from that youth's intermarriage with the illustrious house of Contarini, and the popular joy with which his nuptials were celebrated, the Doge drew favourable auspices for future happiness. Four years, however, had scarcely elapsed from the conclusion of that well-omened marriage, when a series of calamities began, from which death alone was to relieve either the son or his yet more wretched father. In 1445, Giacopo Foscari was denounced to the Ten, as having received presents from foreign potentates, and especially from Filippo-Maria Visconti. The offence, according to the law, was one of the most heinous which a noble could commit. Even if Giacopo were guiltless of infringing that law, it was not easy to establish innocence before a Venetian tribunal. Under the eyes of his own father, compelled to preside at the unnatural examination, a confession was extorted from the prisoner, on the rack; and, from the lips of that father, he received the sentence which banished him for life to Napoli di Romania. On his passage, severe illness delayed him at Trieste; and, at the especial prayer of the Doge, a less remote district was assigned for his punishment; he was permitted to reside at Treviso, and his wife was allowed to participate his exile.

"It was in the commencement of the winter of 1450, while Giacopo Foscari rested, in comparative tranquillity, within the bounds to which he was restricted, that an assassination occurred in the streets of Venice. Hermolao Donato, a Chief of the Ten, was murdered on his return from a sitting of that council, at his own door, by unknown hands. The magnitude of the offence and the violation of the high dignity of the Ten demanded a victim; and the coadjutors of the slain magistrate caught with eager grasp at the slightest clue which suspicion could afford. A domestic in the service of Giacopo Foscari had been seen in Venice on the evening of the murder, and on the following morning, when met in a boat off Mestre by a Chief of the Ten, and asked, 'What news?' he had answered by reporting the assassination, several hours before it was generally known. It might seem that such frankness of itself disproved all participation in the crime; for the author of it was not likely thus unseasonably and prematurely to disclose its committal. But the Ten thought differently, and matters which to others bore conviction of innocence, to them savoured strongly of guilt. The servant was arrested, examined, and barbarously tortured; but even the eightieth application of the strappado failed to elicit one syllable which might justify condemnation. That Giacopo Foscari had experienced the severity of the Council's judgment, and that its jealous watchfulness was daily imposing some new restraint upon his father's authority, powerfully operated to convince the Ten that they must themselves in return be objects of his deadly enmity. Who else, they said, could be more likely to arm the hand of an assassin against a Chief of the Ten, than one whom the Ten have visited with punishment? On this unjust and unsupported surmise, the young Foscari was recalled from Treviso, placed on the rack which his servant had just vacated, tortured again in his father's presence, and not absolved even after he resolutely persisted in denial unto the end.

"The wrongs, however, which Giacopo Foscari endured had by no

means chilled the passionate love with which he continued to regard his ungrateful country. He was now excluded from all communication with his family, torn from the wife of his affections, debarred from the society of his children, hopeless of again embracing those parents who had already far outstripped the natural term of human existence; and to his imagination, for ever centering itself upon the single desire of return, life presented no other object deserving pursuit; till, for the attainment of this wish, life itself at length appeared to be scarcely more than an adequate sacrifice. Preyed upon by this fever of the heart, after six years' unavailing suit for a remission of punishment, in the summer of 1456, he addressed a letter to the Duke of Milan, imploring his good offices with the senate. That letter, purposely left open in a place obvious to the spies by whom, even in his exile, he was surrounded, and afterwards intrusted to an equally treacherous hand for delivery to Sforza, was conveyed, as the writer intended, to the Council of Ten; and the result, which equally fulfilled his expectation, was a hasty summons to Venice to answer for the heavy crime of soliciting foreign intercession with his native government.

"For a third time, Francesco Foscari listened to the accusation of his son; for the first time he heard him openly avow the charge of his accusers, and calmly state that his offence, such as it was, had been committed designedly and aforethought, with the sole object of detection, in order that he might be brought back, even as a malefactor, to Venice. This prompt and voluntary declaration, however, was not sufficient to decide the nice hesitation of his judges. Guilt, they said, might be too easily admitted as well as too pertinaciously denied; and the same process therefore by which, at other times, confession was wrested from the hardened criminal might now compel a too facile self-accuser to retract his acknowledgment. The father again looked on while his son was raised on the accursed cord no less than thirty times, in order that, under his agony, he might be induced to utter a lying declaration of innocence. But this cruelty was exercised in vain; and, when nature gave way, the sufferer was carried to the apartments of the Doge, torn, bleeding, senseless, and dislocated, but firm in his original purpose. Nor had his persecutors relaxed in *theirs;* they renewed his sentence of exile, and added that its first year should be passed in prison. Before he embarked, one interview was permitted with his family. The Doge, as Sanuto, perhaps unconscious of the pathos of his simplicity, has narrated, was an aged and decrepit man, who walked with the support of a crutch, and when he came into the chamber, he spake with great firmness, so that it might seem it was not his son whom he was addressing, but it *was* his son — his only son. 'Go, Giacopo,' was his reply, when prayed for the last time to solicit mercy; 'Go, Giacopo, submit to the will of your country, and seek nothing farther.' This effort of self-restraint was beyond the powers, not of the old man's enduring spirit, but of his exhausted frame; and when he retired, he swooned in the arms of his attendants. Giacopo reached his Candian prison, and was shortly afterwards released by death.

"Francesco Foscari, far less happy in his survival, continued to live on, but it was in sorrow and feebleness which prevented attention to the duties of his high office: he remained secluded in his chamber, never went

abroad, and absented himself even from the sittings of the councils. No practical inconvenience could result from this want of activity in the chief magistrate; for the constitution sufficiently provided against any accidental suspension of his personal functions, and his place in council, and on state occasions, was supplied by an authorised deputy. Some indulgence, moreover, might be thought due to the extreme age and domestic griefs of Foscari; since they appeared to promise that any favour which might be granted would be claimed but for a short period. But yet farther trials were in store. Giacopo Loredano, who in 1467 was appointed one of the Chiefs of the Ten, belonged to a family between which and that of Foscari an hereditary feud had long existed. His uncle Pietro, after gaining high distinction in active service, as Admiral of Venice, on his return to the capital, headed the political faction which opposed the warlike projects of the Doge; divided applause with him by his eloquence in the councils; and so far extended his influence as frequently to obtain majorities in their divisions. In an evil moment of impatience, Foscari once publicly avowed in the senate, that so long as Pietro Loredano lived he should never feel himself really to be Doge. Not long afterwards, the Admiral, engaged as Provveditore with one of the armies opposed to Filippo Maria, died suddenly at a military banquet given during a short suspension of arms; and the evil-omened words of Foscari were connected with his decease. It was remarked, also, that his brother Marco Loredano, one of the Avvogadori, died, in a somewhat similar manner, while engaged in instituting a legal process against a son-in-law of the Doge, for peculation upon the state. The foul rumours partially excited by these untoward coincidences, for they appear in truth to have been no more, met with little acceptation, and were rejected or forgotten except by a single bosom. Giacopo, the son of one, the nephew of the other deceased Loredano, gave full credit to the accusation, inscribed on his father's tomb at Sta. Elena, that he died by poison, bound himself by a solemn vow to the most deadly and unrelenting pursuit of revenge, and fulfilled that vow to the uttermost.

"During the lifetime of Pietro Loredano, Foscari, willing to terminate the feud by a domestic alliance, had tendered the hand of his daughter to one of his rival's sons. The youth saw his proffered bride, openly expressed dislike of her person, and rejected her with marked discourtesy; so that, in the quarrel thus heightened, Foscari might now conceive himself to be the most injured party. Not such was the impression of Giacopo Loredano: year after year he grimly awaited the season most fitted for his unbending purpose; and it arrived at length when he found himself in authority among the Ten. Relying upon the ascendency belonging to that high station, he hazarded a proposal for the deposition of the aged Doge, which was at first, however, received with coldness; for those who had twice before refused a voluntary abdication, shrank from the strange contradiction of now demanding one on compulsion. A junta was required to assist in their deliberations, and among the assessors elected by the Great Council, in complete ignorance of the purpose for which they were needed, was Marco Foscari, a Procuratore of St. Mark, and brother of the Doge himself. The Ten perceived that to reject his assistance might ex-

cite suspicion, while to procure his apparent approbation would give a show of impartiality to their process: his nomination, therefore, was accepted, but he was removed to a separate apartment, excluded from the debate, sworn to keep that exclusion secret, and yet compelled to assent to the final decree in the discussion of which he had not been allowed to participate. The council sat during eight days and nearly as many nights; and, at the close of their protracted meetings, a committee was deputed to *request* the abdication of the Doge. The old man received them with surprise, but with composure, and replied that he had sworn not to abdicate, and therefore must maintain his faith. It was not possible that he could resign; but if it appeared fit to their wisdom that he should cease to be Doge, they had it in their power to make a proposal to that effect to the Great Council. It was far, however, from the intention of the Ten to subject themselves to the chances of debate in that larger body; and, assuming to their own magistracy a prerogative not attributed to it by the constitution, they discharged Foscari from his oath, declared his office vacant, assigned to him a pension of two thousand ducats, and enjoined him to quit the palace within three days, on pain of confiscation of all his property. Loredano, to whom the right belonged, according to the weekly routine of office, enjoyed the barbarous satisfaction of presenting this decree with his own hand. 'Who are you, Signor?' enquired the Doge of another Chief of the Ten who accompanied him, and whose person he did not immediately recognise. 'I am a son of Marco Memmo.' 'Ah, your father,' replied Foscari, 'is my friend.' Then declaring that he yielded willing obedience to the most excellent Council of Ten, and laying aside the ducal bonnet and robes, he surrendered his ring of office, which was broken in his presence. On the morrow, when he prepared to leave the palace, it was suggested to him that he should retire by a private staircase, and thus avoid the concourse assembled in the court-yard below. With calm dignity he refused the proposition: he would descend, he said, by no other than the self-same steps by which he had mounted thirty years before. Accordingly, supported by his brother, he slowly traversed the Giant's Stairs, and, at their foot, leaning on his staff and turning round to the palace, he accompanied his last look to it with these parting words, 'My services established me within your walls; it is the malice of my enemies which tears me from them!'

"It was to the Oligarchy alone that Foscari was obnoxious; by the populace he had always been beloved, and strange indeed would it have been had he now failed to excite their sympathy. But even the regrets of the people of Venice were fettered by their tyrants; and whatever pity they might secretly continue to cherish for their wronged and humiliated prince, all expression of it was silenced by a peremptory decree of the Council, forbidding any mention of his name, and annexing death as a penalty to disobedience. On the fifth day after Foscari's deposition, Pascale Malipieri was elected Doge. The dethroned prince heard the announcement of his successor by the bell of the campanile, suppressed his agitation, but ruptured a blood-vessel in the exertion, and died in a few hours." — Vol. ii. p. 93.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

FRANCIS FOSCARI, *Doge of Venice.*
JACOPO FOSCARI, *Son of the Doge.*
JAMES LOREDANO, *a Patrician.*
MARCO MEMMO, *a Chief of the Forty.*
BARBARIGO, *a Senator.*
Other Senators, The Council of Ten, Guards, Attendants, &c. &c.

WOMAN.

MARINA, *Wife of young* FOSCARI.

Scene — the Ducal Palace, Venice.

THE

TWO FOSCARI.(1)

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter LOREDANO(2) *and* BARBARIGO, *meeting.*

Lor. WHERE is the prisoner?

Bar. Reposing from
The Question.

(1) [The disadvantage, and, in truth, absurdity, of sacrificing higher objects to a formal adherence to the unities (see *antè*, p. 60.) is strikingly displayed in this drama. The whole interest here turns upon the Younger Foscari having returned from banishment, in defiance of the law and its consequences, from an unconquerable longing after his own country Now, the only way to have made this sentiment palatable, the practicable foundation of stupendous sufferings, would have been, to have presented him to the audience, wearing out his heart in exile, and forming his resolution to return, at a distance from his country, or hovering, in excruciating suspense, within sight of its borders. We might then have caught some glimpse of the nature of his motives, and of so extraordinary a character. But as this would have been contrary to one of the unities, we first meet with him led from "the Question," and afterwards taken back to it in the Ducal Palace, or clinging to the dungeon-walls of his native city, and expiring from his dread of leaving them; and therefore feel more wonder than sympathy, when we are told, that these agonising consequences have resulted, not from guilt or disaster, but merely from the intensity of his love for his country. — JEFFREY.]

(2) [The character of Loredano is well conceived and truly tragic. The deep and settled principle of hatred which animates him, and which im-

Lor. The hour's past—fix'd yesterday
For the resumption of his trial.—Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.

Bar. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;
He was o'erwrought by the Question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.

Lor. Well?

Bar. I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari,
Father and son, and all their noxious race;
But the poor wretch has suffer'd beyond nature's
Most stoical endurance.

Lor. Without owning
His crime?

Bar. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avow'd the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

Lor. We shall see.

Bar. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

Lor. How far?

---

pels him to the commission of the most atrocious cruelties, may seem, at first, unnatural and overstrained. But not only is it historically true; but, when the cause of that hatred (the supposed murder of his father and uncles), and when the atrocious maxims of Italian revenge, and that habitual contempt of all the milder feelings are taken into consideration which constituted the glory of a Venetian patriot, we may conceive how such a principle might be not only avowed but exulted in by a Venetian who regarded the house of Foscari as, at once, the enemies of his family and his country. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Bar. To extermination.
Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this.—Let's in to council.
Bar. Yet pause—the number of our colleagues is not
Complete yet; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.
Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge?
Bar. No—he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.
Lor. True—true—
His *last.*
Bar. Will nothing move you?
Lor. *Feels he,* think you?
Bar. He shows it not.
Lor. I have mark'd *that*—the wretch!
Bar. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he pass'd the threshold
The old man fainted.
Lor. It begins to work, then.
Bar. The work is half your own.
Lor. And should be *all* mine—
My father and my uncle are no more.
Bar. I have read their epitaph, which says they died
By poison.(1)
Lor. When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sicken'd shortly:—he *is* sovereign.

(1) ["*Veneno sublatus.*" The tomb is in the church of Santa Elena.]

Bar. A wretched one.
Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans?
Bar. But *did* the Doge make you so?
Lor. Yes.
Bar. What solid proofs?
Lor. When princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second needless.
Bar. But you will move by law?
Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.
Bar. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of commerce,
(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles)
"Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
My sire and uncle?"
Lor. It is written thus.
Bar. And will you leave it unerased?
Lor. Till balanced.
Bar. And how?
[*Two Senators pass over the stage, as in their way to "the Hall of the Council of Ten."*
Lor. You see the number is complete.
Follow me. [*Exit* LOREDANO.
Bar. (*solus*). Follow *thee!* I have follow'd long(1)

(1) [Loredano is accompanied, upon all emergencies, by a senator called Barbarigo — a sort of confidant or chorus — who comes for no end that

Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds, and wretch
Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush
The waters through them; but this son and sire
Might move the elements to pause, and yet
Must I on hardily like them — Oh! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly! —
Lo, where he comes! — Be still, my heart! they are
Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou beat
For those who almost broke thee? (1)

Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI *as prisoner, &c.*

Guard. Let him rest.
Signor, take time.

Jac. Fos. I thank thee, friend, I'm feeble;
But thou may'st stand reproved.

Guard. I'll stand the hazard.

Jac. Fos. That's kind: — I meet some pity, but no mercy;
This is the first.

Guard. And might be last, did they
Who rule behold us. [does:

Bar. (*advancing to the Guard*). There is one who
Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,

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we can discover, but to twit him with conscientious cavils and objections, and then to second him by his personal countenance and authority. — JEFFREY.]

(1) [Loredano is the only personage above mediocrity. The remaining characters are all unnatural, or feeble. Barbarigo is as tame and insignificant a confidant, as ever swept after the train of his principal over the Parisian stage. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Wait their last summons—I am of "the Ten,"
And waiting for that summons, sanction you
Even by my presence: when the last call sounds,
We'll in together.—Look well to the prisoner! [Ah!

Jac. Fos. What voice is that?—'Tis Barbarigo's!
Our house's foe, and one of my few judges.

Bar. To balance such a foe, if such there be,
Thy father sits amongst thy judges.

Jac. Fos. True,
He judges.

Bar. Then deem not the laws too harsh
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state's safety——

Jac. Fos. And his son's. I'm faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*to the Guard*). Let him approach. I must not speak with him
Further than thus: I have transgress'd my duty
In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber. [*Exit* BARBARIGO.

[*Guard conducting* JACOPO FOSCARI *to the window.*

Guard. There, sir, 'tis
Open—How feel you?

Jac. Fos. Like a boy—Oh Venice!

Guard. And your limbs?

Jac. Fos. Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimm'd
The gondola along in childish race,

And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure, in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheer'd us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal!—How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughen'd; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they wax'd fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As show'd that I had search'd the deep: exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurn'd
The foam which broke around me, and pursued
My track like a sea-bird.—I was a boy then. (1)

Guard. Be a man now: there never was more need
Of manhood's strength. [my own,

Jac. Fos. (*looking from the lattice*). My beautiful,
My only Venice—*this is breath!* Thy breeze,

(1) [This speech of Jacopo from the window, while describing the amusements of his youth, is written with a full feeling of the objects which it paints.—Bishop Heber.]

Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!
Thy very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howl'd about my Candiote dungeon, and
Made my heart sick.
Guard. I see the colour comes
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you strength to bear
What more may be imposed!—I dread to think on't.
Jac. Fos. They will not banish me again?—No—no,
Let them wring on; I am strong yet.
Guard. Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.
Jac. Fos. I confess'd
Once—twice before: both times they exiled me.
Guard. And the third time will slay you.
Jac. Fos. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.
Guard. And can you so much love the soil which
hates you? [soil
Jac. Fos. The soil!—Oh no, it is the seed of the
Which persecutes me; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.(1)

(1) [And the hero himself, what is he? If there ever existed in nature a case so extraordinary as that of a man who gravely preferred tortures and a dungeon at home, to a temporary residence in a beautiful island and a fine climate, at the distance of three days' sail, it is what few can be made to believe, and still fewer to sympathise with; and which is, therefore, no very promising subject for dramatic representation. For ourselves, we have little doubt that Foscari wrote the fatal letter with the view, which *was* imputed to him by his accusers, of obtaining an honourable recall

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Bring in the prisoner!

Guard. Signor, you hear the order.

Jac. Fos. Ay, I am used to such a summons; 'tis
The third time they have tortured me:—then lend me
Thine arm. [*To the Guard.*

Offi. Take mine, sir; 'tis my duty to
Be nearest to your person.

Jac. Fos. You!—you are he
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs—
Away!—I'll walk alone.

Offi. As you please, signor;
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I dared not disobey the Council when
They——

Jac. Fos. Bade thee stretch me on their horrid engine.
I pray thee touch me not—that is, just now;
The time will come they will renew that order,
But keep off from me till 'tis issued. As

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from banishment, through foreign influence; and that the colour which, when detected, he endeavoured to give to the transaction, was the evasion of a drowning man, who is reduced to catch at straws and shadows. But, if Lord Byron chose to assume this alleged motive of his conduct as the real one, it behoved him, at least, to set before our eyes the intolerable separation from a beloved country, the lingering home-sickness, the gradual alienation of intellect, and the fruitless hope that his enemies had at length relented, which were necessary to produce a conduct so contrary to all usual principles of action as that which again consigned him to the racks and dungeons of his own country. He should have shown him to us, first, taking leave of Venice, a condemned and banished man; next pining in Candia; next tampering with the agents of government; by which time, and not till then, we should have been prepared to listen with patience to his complaints, and to witness his sufferings with interest as well as horror. — BISHOP HEBER.]

I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrenching,
And the cold drops strain through my brow, as if——
But onward—I have borne it—I can bear it.—
How looks my father?

Offi. With his wonted aspect.

Jac. Fos. So does the earth, and sky, the blue of ocean,
The brightness of our city, and her domes,
The mirth of her Piazza, even now
Its merry hum of nations pierces here,
Even here, into these chambers of the unknown
Who govern, and the unknown and the unnumber'd
Judged and destroy'd in silence,—all things wear
The self-same aspect, to my very sire!
Nothing can sympathise with Foscari,
Not even a Foscari.—Sir, I attend you.

[*Exeunt* JACOPO FOSCARI, *Officer, &c.*

Enter MEMMO *and another Senator.*

Mem. He's gone—we are too late:—think you "the Ten"
Will sit for any length of time to-day?

Sen. They say the prisoner is most obdurate,
Persisting in his first avowal; but
More I know not.

Mem. And that is much; the secrets
Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
From us, the premier nobles of the state,
As from the people.

Sen. Save the wonted rumours,
Which—like the tales of spectres, that are rife

Near ruin'd buildings—never have been proved,
Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little
Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
Unfathom'd mysteries.
Mem. But with length of time
We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.
Sen. Or Doge?
Mem. Why, no; not if I can avoid it.
Sen. 'Tis the first station of the state, and may
Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
Attain'd by noble aspirants.
Mem. To such
I leave it; though born noble, my ambition
Is limited: I'd rather be an unit
Of an united and imperial "Ten,"
Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher.—
Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?

Enter MARINA, *with a female Attendant.*

Mar. What, no one?—I am wrong, there still are two;
But they are senators.
Mem. Most noble lady,
Command us.
Mar. *I command!*—Alas! my life
Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.
Mem. I understand thee, but I must not answer.
Mar. (*fiercely*). True—none dare answer here save on the rack,
Or question save those——

Mem. (*interrupting her*). High-born dame! (1) bethink thee
Where thou now art.
Mar. Where I now am!—It was
My husband's father's palace.
Mem. The Duke's palace,
Mar. And his son's prison;—true, I have not forgot it;
And if there were no other nearer, bitterer
Remembrances, would thank the illustrious Memmo
For pointing out the pleasures of the place.
Mem. Be calm!
Mar. (*looking up towards heaven.*) I am; but oh, thou eternal God!
Canst *thou* continue so, with such a world?
Mem. Thy husband yet may be absolved.
Mar. He is,
In heaven. I pray you, signor senator,
Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
So is the Doge; he has a son at stake
Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
Or had; they are there within, or were at least
An hour since, face to face, as judge and culprit:
Will *he* condemn *him?*

(1) [She was a Contarini —

"A daughter of the house that now among
Its ancestors in monumental brass
Numbers eight Doges." — ROGERS.

On the occasion of her marriage with the younger Foscari, the Bucentaur came out in its splendour; and a bridge of boats was thrown across the Canal Grande for the bridegroom, and his retinue of three hundred horse. According to Sanuto, the tournaments in the place of St. Mark lasted three days, and were attended by thirty thousand people.]

Mem. I trust not.
Mar. But if
He does not, there are those will sentence both.
Mem. They can.
Mar. And with them power and will are one
In wickedness:—my husband's lost!
Mem. Not so;
Justice is judge in Venice.
Mar. If it were so,
There now would be no Venice. But let it
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of nature's summons; but "the Ten's" is quicker,
And we must wait on't. Ah! a voice of wail!
[*A faint cry within.*
Sen. Hark!
Mem. 'Twas a cry of—
Mar. No, no; not my husband's—
Not Foscari's.
Mem. The voice was—
Mar. *Not his:* no.
He shriek! No; that should be his father's part,
Not his—not his—he'll die in silence.
[*A faint groan again within.*
Mem. What!
Again?
Mar. *His* voice! it seem'd so: I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love; but—no—no—no—it must have been
A fearful pang, which wrung a groan from him.
Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs, wouldst thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain, in silence?

Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari,
Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life;
I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs:
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have shriek'd,
But did not; for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears.(1)

Mem. All's silent now.

Mar. Perhaps all's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Mem. How now, friend, what seek you?

Offi. A leech. The prisoner has fainted.

[*Exit Officer.*

Mem. Lady,
'Twere better to retire.

Sen. (*offering to assist her*). I pray thee do so.

Mar. Off! *I* will tend him.

Mem. You! Remember, lady!
Ingress is given to none within those chambers,
Except "the Ten," and their familiars.

Mar. Well,
I know that none who enter there return
As they have enter'd—many never; but
They shall not balk my entrance.

(1) [There is great dignity and beauty in the language of Marina, when she will not believe that her lord can be so far overcome by the rack as to utter an unseemly cry.—BISHOP HEBER.]

Mem. Alas! this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.
Mar. Who shall oppose me?
Mem. They
Whose duty 'tis to do so.
Mar. 'Tis *their* duty
To trample on all human feelings, all
Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I'll pass.
Mem. It is impossible.
Mar. That shall be tried.
Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through hosts
With levell'd spears; and think you a few jailors,
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way;
This is the Doge's palace; I am wife
Of the Duke's son, the *innocent* Duke's son,
And they shall hear this!
Mem. It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.
Mar. What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.
[*Exit* MARINA.
Sen. Poor lady!
Mem. 'Tis mere desperation: she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.
Sen. And

Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.

[*The Officer passes over the stage with another person.*

Mem. I hardly
Thought that "the Ten" had even this touch of pity,
Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

Sen. Pity! Is't pity to recall to feeling
The wretch too happy to escape to death
By the compassionate trance, poor nature's last
Resource against the tyranny of pain?

Mem. I marvel they condemn him not at once.

Sen. That's not their policy: they'd have him live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land,
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.

Mem. Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

Sen. None, save the Letter,(1) which he says was written,

(1) ["Night and day
Brooding on what he had been, what he was,
'Twas more than he could bear. His longing-fits
Thicken'd upon him. His desire for home
Became a madness; and, resolved to go,
If but to die, in his despair he writes
A letter to the sovereign-prince of Milan,
(To him whose name, among the greatest now,*
Had perish'd, blotted out at once and rased,
But for the rugged limb of an old oak.)
Soliciting his influence with the state,
And drops it to be found." — ROGERS.]

* Francesco Sforza. His father, when at work in the field, was accosted by some soldiers, and asked if he would enlist. 'Let me throw my

Address'd to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the senate's hands,
And thus he should be re-convey'd to Venice.

Mem. But as a culprit.

Sen. Yes, but to his country;
And that was all he sought, — so he avouches.

Mem. The accusation of the bribes was proved.

Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annull'd by the death-bed confession
Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
Chief of "the Ten." (1)

Mem. Then why not clear him?

Sen. That
They ought to answer; for it is well known
That Almoro Donato, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.

(1) [The extraordinary sentence pronounced against him, still existing among the archives of Venice, runs thus: — "Giacopo Foscari, accused of the murder of Hermolao Donato, has been arrested and examined; and, from the testimony, evidence, and documents exhibited, *it distinctly appears* that he is guilty of the aforesaid crime; nevertheless, on account of his obstinacy, and of *enchantments and spells*, in his possession, of which there are manifest proofs, it has not been possible to extract from him the truth, which is clear from parole and written evidence; for, while he was on the cord, he uttered neither word nor groan, but only murmured something to himself indistinctly and under his breath; therefore, *as the honour of the state requires*, he is condemned to a more distant banishment in Candia." Will it be credited, that a distinct proof of his innocence, obtained by the discovery of the real assassin, wrought no change in his unjust and cruel sentence?" — See *Venetian Sketches*, vol. ii. p. 97.]

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mattock on that oak,' he replied, 'and if it remains there, I will.' It remained there; and the peasant, regarding it as a sign, enlisted. He became soldier, general, prince; and his grandson, in the palace at Milan, said to Paulus Jovius, 'You behold these guards and this grandeur: I owe every thing to the branch of an oak, the branch that held my grandfather's mattock.' — ROGERS.

Mem. There must be more in this strange process than
The apparent crimes of the accused disclose—
But here come two of "the Ten;" let us retire.
[*Exeunt* MEMMO *and Senator.*

Enter LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*addressing* LOR.) That were too much: believe me, 'twas not meet
The trial should go further at this moment.

Lor. And so the Council must break up, and Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations?

Bar. No,
That's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's state.

Lor. And had he not recover'd?

Bar. To relapse
Upon the least renewal.

Lor. 'Twas not tried.

Bar. 'Tis vain to murmur; the majority
In council were against you.

Lor. Thanks to you, sir,
And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'er-ruled my own.

Bar. I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the Question,
And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,
Makes me wish——

Lor. What?

Bar. That *you* would *sometimes* feel,
As I do always.

Lor. Go to, you're a child,

Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh,
And melted by a tear — a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy.
Bar. He shed
No tears.
Lor. He cried out twice.
Bar. A saint had done so,
Even with the crown of glory in his eye,
At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry
For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,
But wrung from pangs, and follow'd by no prayers.
Lor. He mutter'd many times between his teeth,
But inarticulately.
Bar. That I heard not;
You stood more near him.
Lor. I did so.
Bar. Methought,
To my surprise too, you were touch'd with mercy,
And were the first to call out for assistance
When he was failing.
Lor. I believed that swoon
His last.
Bar. And have I not oft heard thee name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?
Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavow'd, he'll be lamented.
Bar. What, wouldst thou slay his memory?
Lor. Wouldst thou have

His state descend to his children, as it must,
If he die unattainted?

Bar. War with *them* too?

Lor. With all their house, till theirs or mine are nothing.

Bar. And the deep agony of his pale wife,
And the repress'd convulsion of the high
And princely brow of his old father, which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away
In stern serenity; these moved you not?

[*Exit* LOREDANO.

He's silent in his hate, as Foscari
Was in his suffering; and the poor wretch moved me
More by his silence than a thousand outcries
Could have effected. 'Twas a dreadful sight
When his distracted wife broke through into
The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
What we could scarcely look upon, long used
To such sights. I must think no more of this,
Lest I forget in this compassion for
Our foes their former injuries, and lose
The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me; but mine would be content
With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts; but for the present, Foscari
Has a short hourly respite, granted at
The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
The hall, and his own sufferings.—Lo! they come:
How feeble and forlorn! I cannot bear

To look on them again in this extremity:
I'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

[*Exit* BARBARIGO.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the DOGE'S *Palace.*

The DOGE *and a* SENATOR.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?

Doge. Now;
I overlook'd it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen—

[*The* DOGE *sits down and signs the paper.*
There, signor.

Sen. (*looking at the paper*). You have forgot; it is not sign'd.

Doge. Not sign'd? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin
To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipp'd the pen without effect.(1)

Sen. (*dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the paper before the* DOGE). Your hand, too, shakes, my lord: allow me, thus—

Doge. 'Tis done, I thank you.

(1) [MS.—"That I had dipp'd the pen too heedlessly."]

Sen. Thus the act confirm'd
By you and by "the Ten" gives peace to Venice.
Doge. 'Tis long since she enjoy'd it: may it be
As long ere she resume her arms!
Sen. 'Tis almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.
Doge. No doubt:
I found her Queen of Ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy; (1) it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem
The gems of Brescia and Ravenna; Crema
And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.
Sen. 'Tis most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.
Doge. Perhaps so.
Sen. Which should be made manifest.
Doge. I have not complain'd, sir.
Sen. My good lord, forgive me.
Doge. For what?
Sen. My heart bleeds for you.
Doge. For me, signor?
Sen. And for your ——
Doge. Stop!
Sen. It must have way, my lord:
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kindness,
Not to feel deeply for your son.

(1) [MS. — "Mistress of Lombardy — it is some comfort."]

Doge. Was this
In your commission?
Sen. What, my lord?
Doge. This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty's sign'd;
Return with it to them who sent you.
Sen. I
Obey. I had in charge, too, from the Council
That you would fix an hour for their re-uinon.
Doge. Say, when they will — now, even at this moment,
If it so please them: I am the state's servant.
Sen. They would accord some time for your repose.
Doge. I have no repose, that is, none which shall cause
The loss of an hour's time unto the state.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and *what* I have been ever.
[*Exit* SENATOR.
[*The* DOGE *remains in silence.*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!
Doge. Say on.
Att. The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.
Doge. Bid her enter. Poor
Marina! [*Exit Attendant.*
[*The* DOGE *remains in silence as before.*

Enter MARINA.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.

Doge. I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The state.

Mar. I wish'd to speak to you of *him.*

Doge. Your husband?

Mar. And your son.

Doge. Proceed, my daughter!

Mar. I had obtain'd permission from "the Ten"
To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.

Doge. You had so.

Mar. 'Tis revoked.

Doge. By whom?

Mar. "The Ten."—When we had reach'd "the Bridge of Sighs,"
Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurr'd: a messenger was sent back to
"The Ten;" but as the court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that
Until that high tribunal re-assembled
The dungeon walls must still divide us.

Doge. True,
The form has been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourn'd; and till it meets,
'Tis dubious.

Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,
They'll torture him again; and he and *I*

Must purchase by renewal of the rack
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the heavens!—Oh God!
Dost thou see this?

Doge. Child—child——

Mar. (*abruptly*). Call *me* not "child!"
You soon will have no children—you deserve none—
You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears
Of blood from Spartans! Though these did not weep
Their boys who died in battle, it is written
That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
Stretch'd forth a hand to save them?

Doge. You behold me:
I cannot weep—I would I could; but if
Each white hair on this head were a young life,
This ducal cap the diadem of earth,
This ducal ring with which I wed the waves
A talisman to still them—I'd give all
For him.

Mar. With less he surely might be saved.

Doge. That answer only shows you know not Venice.
Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,
In all her mystery. Hear me—they who aim
At Foscari, aim no less at his father;
The sire's destruction would not save the son;
They work by different means to the same end,
And that is——but they have not conquer'd yet.

Mar. But they have crush'd.

Doge. Nor crush'd as yet—I live.

Mar. And your son,—how long will he live?

Doge. I trust,
For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash boy,
With womanish impatience to return,
Hath ruin'd all by that detected letter:
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke:
Had he but borne a little, little longer
His Candiote exile, I had hopes——he has quench'd them——
He must return.

Mar. To exile?

Doge. I have said it.

Mar. And can I not go with him?

Doge. You well know
This prayer of yours was twice denied before
By the assembled "Ten," and hardly now
Will be accorded to a third request,
Since aggravated errors on the part
Of your lord renders them still more austere.

Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old human fiends,
With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes, strange
To tears save drops of dotage, with long white
And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and heads
As palsied as their hearts are hard, they council,
Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguish'd
In their accursed bosoms.

Doge. You know not——

Mar. I do—I do—and so should you, methinks—
That these are demons: could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and suckled—

Who have loved, or talk'd at least of love—have given [babes
Their hands in sacred vows—have danced their
Upon their knees, perhaps have mourn'd above them—
In pain, in peril, or in death—who are,
Or were at least in seeming, human, could
Do as they have done by yours, and you yourself
You, who abet them?

Doge. I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.

Mar. *You* know it well,
And feel it nothing.

Doge. I have borne so much,
That words have ceased to shake me.

Mar. Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and your flesh shook not:
And after that, what are a woman's words? [you.
No more than woman's tears, that they should shake

Doge. Woman, this clamorous grief of thine, I tell
Is no more in the balance weigh'd with that [thee,
Which——but I pity thee, my poor Marina!

Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it from me;
Pity thy son! *Thou* pity!—'tis a word
Strange to thy heart—how came it on thy lips?

Doge. I must bear these reproaches, though they wrong me.
Couldst thou but read——

Mar. 'Tis not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts,—where then
Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?

Doge (*pointing downwards*). There

Mar. In the earth?

Doge. To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
Loaded with marble, than the thoughts which press it
Now, you will know me better.

Mar. Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?

Doge. Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloke their soul's hoarded triumph, as a fit one
To mingle with my name; that name shall be,
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was
When I received it.

Mar. But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not save,
You were the last to bear it.

Doge. Would it were so!
Better for him he never had been born;
Better for me.—I have seen our house dishonour'd.

Mar. That's false! A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppress'd but not disgraced, crush'd, overwhelm'd,
Alive, or dead, for prince or paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonour'd!—*he* dishonour'd!
I tell thee, Doge, 'tis Venice is dishonour'd;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.
'Tis ye who are all traitors, tyrant!—ye!
Did you but love your country like this victim

Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile,
You'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.

Doge. He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took from me,
Than Jacopo's disgrace.

Mar. That word again?

Doge. Has he not been condemn'd?

Mar. Is none but guilt so?

Doge. Time may restore his memory—I would hope so.
He was my pride, my——but 'tis useless now—
I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were ominous.

Mar. I say he's innocent! And were he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?

Doge. I shrank not from him:
But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from those duties;
Twice I demanded it, but was refused:
They must then be fulfill'd. (1)

(1) [The interest of this play is founded upon feelings so peculiar or overstrained, as to engage no sympathy; and the whole story turns on incidents that are neither pleasing nor natural. The younger Foscari undergoes the rack twice (once in the hearing of the audience), merely because he has chosen to feign himself a traitor, that he might be brought back from undeserved banishment, and dies at last of pure dotage on this sentiment; while the elder Foscari submits, in profound and immoveable silence, to this treatment of his son, lest, by seeming to feel for his unhappy fate, he should be implicated in his guilt — though he is supposed guiltless. He, the Doge, is afraid to stir hand or foot, to look or speak, while these inexplicable horrors are transacting, on account of the hostility of one

Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
" The Ten."

Doge. Who bears it?

Att. Noble Loredano.

Doge. He!—but admit him. [*Exit Attendant.*

Mar. Must I then retire?

Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if this
Concerns your husband, and if not——Well, signor,
Your pleasure! [*To* LOREDANO *entering.*

Lor. I bear that of " the Ten."

Doge. They
Have chosen well their envoy.

Lor. 'Tis *their* choice
Which leads me here.

Doge. It does their wisdom honour,
And no less to their courtesy.—Proceed.]

Lor. We have decided.

Doge. We?

Lor. " The Ten" in council.

Doge. What! have they met again, and met with-
Apprising me? [out

Lor. They wish'd to spare your feelings,
No less than age.

Doge. That's new—when spared they either?
I thank them, notwithstanding.

Lor. You know well

Loredano, who lords it in the council of " the Ten," nobody knows why or how; and who at last " enmeshes " both father and son in his toils, in spite of their passive obedience and non-resistance to his plans. They are silly flies for this spider to catch, and " feed fat his ancient grudge upon."—JEFFREY.]

That they have power to act at their discretion,
With or without the presence of the Doge. [fore
Doge. 'Tis some years since I learn'd this, long be-
I became Doge, or dream'd of such advancement.
You need not school me, signor; I sate in
That council when you were a young patrician.
Lor. True, in my father's time; I have heard him
The admiral, his brother, say as much. [and
Your highness may remember them; they both
Died suddenly.
Doge. And if they did so, better
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.
Lor. No doubt; yet most men like to live their days out.
Doge. And did not they?
Lor. The grave knows best: they died,
As I said, suddenly.
Doge. Is that so strange,
That you repeat the word emphatically? [death
Lor. So far from strange, that never was there
In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think *you* not so?
Doge. What should I think of mortals?
Lor. That they have mortal foes.
Doge. I understand you;
Your sires were mine, and you are heir in all things.
Lor. You best know if I should be so.
Doge. I do.
Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
Foul rumours were abroad; I have also read
Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'Tis perhaps as true as most

Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.

Lor. Who dares say so?

Doge. I!—'Tis true
Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
As their son e'er can be, and I no less
Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe:
I never work'd by plot in council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.
The proof is, your existence. (1)

Lor. I fear not.

Doge. You have no cause, being what I am; but were I
That you would have me thought, you long ere now
Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I care not.

Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
That is, by open means.

Doge. But I, good signor,
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke,
In blood, in mind, in means; and that they know
Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down: be sure,
Before or since that period, had I held you
At so much price as to require your absence,
A word of mine had set such spirits to work
As would have made you nothing. But in all things
I have observed the strictest reverence;
Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have strain'd

(1) [MS. — "The proof is — that you live."]

(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what
I could enforce for my authority,
Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
I have observed with veneration, like
A priest's for the high altar, even unto
The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
Safety, and all save honour, the decrees,
The health, the pride, and welfare of the state.
And now, sir, to your business.

Lor. 'Tis decreed,
That, without farther repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn guilt is,
(" The Ten," dispensing with the stricter law
Which still prescribes the Question till a full
Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avow'd his crime in not denying that
The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
James Foscari return to banishment,
And sail in the same galley which convey'd him.

Mar. Thank God! At least they will not drag him more
Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
Desire, were to escape from such a land.

Doge. That is not a Venetian thought, my daughter.

Mar. No, 'twas too human. May I share his exile?

Lor. Of this " the Ten" said nothing.

Mar. So I thought:

That were too human, also. But it was not
Inhibited?

Lor. It was not named.

Mar. (*to the Doge*). Then, father,
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much:
[*To* LOREDANO.
And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.

Doge. I will endeavour.

Mar. And you, signor?

Lor. Lady!
'Tis not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.

Mar. Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of——

Doge. Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these things?

Mar. A prince's and his subject's.

Lor. Subject!

Mar. Oh!
It galls you:—well, you are his equal, as
You think; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant:—well, then, you're a prince,
A princely noble; and what then am I?

Lor. The offspring of a noble house.

Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What, or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free thoughts?

Lor. The presence of your husband's judges.

Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.

Mar. Keep
Those maxims for your mass of scared mechanics,
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,
Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And mask'd nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings off and drownings,
Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or under
The water's level; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions, [and
Your "Bridge of Sighs," (1) your strangling chamber,
Your torturing instruments, have made ye seem
The beings of another and worse world!
Keep such for them: I fear ye not. I know ye;
Have known and proved your worst, in the infernal
Process of my poor husband! Treat me as
Ye treated him:—you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear *from* you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not?

Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.

Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.

Lor. Lady! words
Utter'd within these walls I bear no further
Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the state's service.
Doge! have you aught in answer?

Doge. Something from
The Doge; it may be also from a parent.

Lor. My mission *here* is to the *Doge.*

(1) [See *ante*, Vol. XII. p. 90.]

Doge. Then say
The Doge will choose his own embassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father——
Lor. I remember *mine.*—Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious lady,
And bow me to the Duke. [*Exit* LOREDANO.
Mar. Are you content?
Doge. I am what you behold.
Mar. And that's a mystery.
Doge. All things are so to mortals; who can read them
Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume—man. and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves, his heart and brain,(1)
But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it: all the sins
We find in others, nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of fortune;
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,
And when we cry out against Fate, 'twere well
We should remember Fortune can take nought
Save what she *gave*—the rest was nakedness,
And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle
With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
Where hunger swallows all in one low want, (2)
And the original ordinance, that man

(1) [MS. — "The blackest leaf, his heart, and blankest his brain."]
(2) [MS. — "Where hunger swallows all — where ever was,
The monarch who could bear a three days' fast."]

Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all passions
Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow—clay from first to last,
The prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our fame is in men's breath (1), our lives upon
Less than their breath; our durance upon days,
Our days on seasons; our whole being on
Something which is not *us!*—So, we are slaves,
The greatest as the meanest—nothing rests
Upon our will; the will itself no less
Depends upon a straw than on a storm; (2)
And when we think we lead, we are most led,
And still towards death, a thing which comes as much
Without our act or choice as birth, so that
Methinks we must have sinn'd in some old world,
And *this* is hell: the best is, that it is not
Eternal.

Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.

Doge. And how then shall we judge each other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am call'd upon
To judge my son? I have administer'd
My country faithfully—victoriously—
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled realms;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.

(1) [See *antè*, Vol. XII. p. 19.
"What's fame? a fancied life in others breath,
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death."—POPE.]

(2) [MS.— "the will itself dependent
Upon a storm, a straw, and both alike
Leading to death."]

Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of such things,
So I be left with him.
Doge. You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.
Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.
Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?
Mar. I know not, reck not—
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman—
Any where, where we might respire unfetter'd,
And live nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state. [husband,
Doge. What, wouldst thou have a renegade for
And turn him into traitor?
Mar. He is none!
The country is the traitress, which thrusts forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem
None rebels except subjects? The prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more
A brigand than the robber-chief.
Doge. I cannot
Charge me with such a breach of faith.
Mar. No; thou
Observ'st, obey'st, such laws as make old Draco's
A code of mercy by comparison.
Doge. I found the law; I did not make it. Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment; but as prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the charter
Left by our fathers.

Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?
Doge. Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is—a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeath'd
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people sway'd by senates.
Mar. Rather say,
Groan'd under the stern oligarchs.
Doge. Perhaps so;
But yet subdued the world: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest,
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintain'd in vigour.
Mar. This means that you are more a Doge than father.
Doge. It means, I am more citizen than either.
If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.
Mar. Accursed be the city where the laws
Would stifle nature's!
Doge. Had I as many sons
As I have years, I would have given them all,
Not without feeling, but I would have given them
To the state's service, to fulfil her wishes
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,

Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse
She might decree.
Mar. And this is patriotism?
To me it seems the worst barbarity.
Let me seek out my husband: the sage "Ten,"
With all its jealousy, will hardly war
So far with a weak woman as deny me
A moment's access to his dungeon.
Doge. I'll
So far take on myself, as order that
You may be admitted.
Mar. And what shall I say
To Foscari from his father?
Doge. That he obey
The laws.
Mar. And nothing more? Will you not see him
Ere he depart? It may be the last time. [see
Doge. The last!—my boy!—the last time I shall
My last of children! Tell him I will come.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Prison of JACOPO FOSCARI.

Jac. Fos. (*solus*). No light, save yon faint gleam
which shows me walls
Which never echo'd but to sorrow's sounds,

The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clank'd, the groan
Of death, the imprecation of despair!
And yet for this I have return'd to Venice,
With some faint hope, 'tis true, that time, which wears
The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and here
Must I consume my own, which never beat
For Venice but with such a yearning as
The dove has for her distant nest, when wheeling
High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these which
[*Approaching the wall.*
Are scrawl'd along the inexorable wall? (1)
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the names
Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words of
A grief too great for many. This stone page
Holds like an epitaph their history;
And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
His own and his beloved's name. Alas!
I recognise some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches. (2)
[*He engraves his name.*

(1) [For Mr. Hobhouse's account of the state dungeons of Venice, see *ante*, Vol. VIII. p. 273.]

(2) [MS. — "Which never can be read but, as 't was written,
By wretched beings."]

Enter a Familiar of "the Ten." (1)

Fam. I bring you food.

Jac. Fos. I pray you set it down;
I am past hunger: but my lips are parch'd—
The water!

Fam. [There.

Jac. Fos. (*after drinking*). I thank you: I am better.

Fam. I am commanded to inform you that
Your further trial is postponed.

Jac. Fos. Till when?

Fam. I know not.—It is also in my orders
That your illustrious lady be admitted.

Jac. Fos. Ah! they relent, then—I had ceased to hope it:
'T was time.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My best beloved!

Jac. Fos. (*embracing her*). My true wife,
And only friend! What happiness!

Mar. We'll part
No more.

Jac. Fos. How! would'st thou share a dungeon?

Mar. Ay,
The rack, the grave, all—any thing with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall

(1) [Lord Byron, in this tragedy, has not ventured upon further deviation from historical truth than is fully authorised by the licence of the drama. We may remark, however, that after Giacopo had been tortured, he was removed to the Ducal apartments, not to one of the *Pozzi*; that his death occurred, not at Venice, but at Canea; that fifteen months elapsed between his last condemnation and his father's deposition; and that the death of the Doge took place, not at the palace, but in his own house.—*Venet. Sket.* vol. ii. p. 105.]

Be ignorant of each other, yet I will
Share that—all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.
How dost thou? How are those worn limbs? Alas!
Why do I ask? Thy paleness——
Jac. Fos. 'Tis the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine,
For thou art pale too, my Marina!
Mar. 'Tis
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin (1)
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even thine eyes—
No, not thine eyes—they sparkle—how they sparkle!
Jac. Fos. And thine!—but I am blinded by the torch. [here?
Mar. As I had been without it. Couldst thou see
Jac. Fos. Nothing at first; but use and time had taught me
Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice; but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.

(1) [MS. — "Of the familiar's torch, which seems to love
Darkness far more than light."]

Mar. What?

Jac. Fos. My name: look, 'tis there — recorded
The name of him who here preceded me, [next
If dungeon dates say true.

Mar. And what of him?

Jac. Fos. These walls are silent of men's ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern walls
Were never piled on high save o'er the dead,
Or those who soon must be so. — *What of him?*
Thou askest. — What of me? may soon be ask'd,
With the like answer — doubt and dreadful surmise —
Unless thou tell'st my tale.

Mar. *I speak* of thee!

Jac. Fos. And wherefore not? All then shall speak of me:
The tyranny of silence is not lasting,
And, though events be hidden, just men's groans
Will burst all cerement, even a living grave's!
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear.

Mar. Thy life is safe.

Jac. Fos. And liberty?

Mar. The mind should make its own.

Jac. Fos. That has a noble sound; but 'tis a sound,
A music most impressive, but too transient:
The mind is much, but is not all. The mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,
Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me; but 'tis not all, for there are things

More woful — such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.
Mar. Alas! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is prince.
Jac. Fos. That thought would scarcely aid me to endure it.
My doom is common, many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father's palace;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope
Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford
Our only day; for, save the gaoler's torch,
And a strange firefly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!
I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;
It sinks in solitude (1): my soul is social.
Mar. I will be with thee.
Jac. Fos. Ah! if it were so!
But *that* they never granted — nor will grant,

(1) [Persons condemned to solitary confinement generally, we are assured, become either madmen or idiots, as mind or matter happens to predominate, when the mysterious balance between them is destroyed. But they who are subjected to such a dreadful punishment are generally, like most perpetrators of gross crimes, men of feeble internal resources. Men of talents, like Trenck, have been known, in the deepest seclusion, and most severe confinement, to battle the foul fiend melancholy, and to come off conquerors during a captivity of years. Those who suffer imprisonment for the sake of their country, or their religion, have yet a stronger support, and may exclaim, though in a different sense from that of Othello, —

"It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul." —

SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

And I shall be alone: no men—no books—
Those lying likenesses of lying men.
I ask'd for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeath as portraits, and they were
Refused me,—so these walls have been my study,
More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The Hall not far from hence, which bears on high
Hundreds of doges, and their deeds and dates.

Mar. I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.

Jac. Fos. I know it—look!

[*He points to his limbs, as referring to the question which he had undergone.*

Mar. No—no—no more of that: even they relent
From that atrocity.

Jac. Fos. What then?

Mar. That you
Return to Candia.

Jac. Fos. Then my last hope's gone.
I could endure my dungeon, for 'twas Venice;
I could support the torture, there was something
In my native air that buoy'd my spirits up
Like a ship on the ocean toss'd by storms,
But proudly still bestriding the high waves,
And holding on its course; but *there*, afar,
In that accursed isle of slaves and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seem'd mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.

Mar. And *here?*

Jac. Fos. At once — by better means, as briefer.
What! would they even deny me my sire's sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?

Mar. My husband!
I have sued to accompany thee hence,
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is passion, and not patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A paradise; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.

Jac. Fos. Well I know *how* wretched!

Mar. And yet you see how from their banishment
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remain'd of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean-Rome;(1)
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?

Jac. Fos. Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs, seeking

(1) In Lady Morgan's fearless and excellent work upon Italy, I perceive the expression of "Rome of the Ocean" applied to Venice. The same phrase occurs in the "Two Foscari." My publisher can vouch for me, that the tragedy was written and sent to England some time before I had seen Lady Morgan's work, which I only received on the 16th of August. I hasten, however, to notice the coincidence, and to yield the originality of the phrase to her who first placed it before the public. I am the more anxious to do this, as I am informed (for I have seen but few of the specimens, and those accidentally,) that there have been lately brought against me charges of plagiarism. [See note to the description of a shipwreck, *Don Juan*, c. ii. s. xxvi. *post.*]

Another region, with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila
From fertile Italy, to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late country,
And many thoughts; but afterwards address'd
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this—though I know not.

Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

Jac. Fos. Ay—we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting,
Or after their departure; of that malady(1)
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fever'd eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrained from treading them?
That melody(2), which out of tones and tunes

(1) The calenture.—[A distemper peculiar to sailors in hot climates.—

"So by a calenture misled
The mariner with rapture sees
On the smooth ocean's azure bed
Enamel'd fields and verdant trees:
With eager haste he longs to rove,
In that fantastic scene, and thinks
It must be some enchanted grove,
And in he leaps, and down he sinks." —SWIFT.]

(2) Alluding to the Swiss air and its effects.—[The *Ranz des Vaches*, played upon the bag-pipe by the young cow-keepers on the mountains:—"An air," says Rousseau, "so dear to the Swiss, that it was forbidden, under the pain of death, to play it to the troops, as it immediately drew tears from

Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous thought,
And dies. You call this *weakness!* It is strength,
I say,—the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country, can love nothing.

Mar. Obey her, then: 'tis she that puts thee forth.

Jac. Fos. Ay, there it is; 'tis like a mother's curse
Upon my soul—the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,
Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitch'd together—I'm alone.

Mar. You shall be so no more—I will go with thee.

Jac. Fos. My best Marina!—and our children?

Mar. They,
I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy, (which holds all ties
As threads, which may be broken at her pleasure,)
Will not be suffer'd to proceed with us.

Jac. Fos. And canst thou leave them?

Mar. Yes. With many a pang.
But—I *can* leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this

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them, and made those who heard it desert, or die of what is called *la maladie du pais*, so ardent a desire did it excite to return to their country. It is in vain to seek in this air for energetic accents capable of producing such astonishing effects, for which strangers are unable to account from the music, which is in itself uncouth and wild. But it is from habit, recollections, and a thousand circumstances, retraced in this tune by those natives who hear it, and reminding them of their country, former pleasures of their youth, and all their ways of living, which occasion a bitter reflection at having lost them."—E.]

Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted
By duties paramount; and 'tis our first
On earth to bear.
Jac. Fos. Have I not borne?
Mar. Too much
From tyrannous injustice, and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,
Which, as compared with what you have undergone
Of late, is mercy.
Jac. Fos. Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seem'd ploughing deep into your heart; you never
Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbed vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.
Mar. I will divide this with you. Let us think
Of our departure from this much-loved city,
(Since you must *love* it, as it seems,) and this
Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles: we must sail ere night. [father?
Jac. Fos. That's sudden. Shall I not behold my
Mar. You will.
Jac. Fos. Where?
Mar. Here, or in the ducal chamber—
He said not which. I would that you could bear
Your exile as he bears it.
Jac. Fos. Blame him not.
I sometimes murmur for a moment; but

He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his aged head
Suspicion from "the Ten," and upon mine
Accumulated ills.

Mar. Accumulated!
What pangs are those they have spared you?

Jac. Fos. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 'twas
Upon my former exile.

Mar. That is true,
And thus far I am also the state's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves—away—away—
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorr'd,
Unjust, and——

Jac. Fos. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my country?

Mar. Men and angels!
The blood of myriads reeking up to heaven,
The groans of slaves in chains, and men in dungeons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence*. *Couldst thou* say
Aught in its favour, who would praise like *thee?*

Jac. Fos. Let us address us then, since so it must be,
To our departure. Who comes here?

Enter LOREDANO, *attended by Familiars.*

Lor. (*to the Familiars*). Retire,
But leave the torch. [*Exeunt the two Familiars.*

Jac. Fos. Most welcome, noble signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have drawn
Such presence hither.
Lor. 'Tis not the first time
I have visited these places.
Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult us, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us?
Lor. Neither are of my office, noble lady!
I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce "the Ten's" decree.
Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated: it is known.
Lor. As how?
Mar. I have inform'd him, not so gently,
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues; but he knew it.
If you come for our thanks, take them, and hence!
The dungeon gloom is deep enough without you,
And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though
Their sting is honester.
Jac. Fos. I pray you, calm you:
What can avail such words?
Mar. To let him know
That he is known.
Lor. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.
Mar. I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.
Lor. You do well

To nurse them wisely. Foscari — you know
Your sentence, then?
Jac. Fos. Return to Candia?
Lor. True—
For life.
Jac. Fos. Not long.
Lor. I said—for *life.*
Jac. Fos. And I
Repeat — not long.
Lor. A year's imprisonment
In Canea — afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.
Jac. Fos. Both the same to me: the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is 't true my wife accompanies me?
Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.
Mar. Who obtain'd that justice?
Lor. One who wars not with women.
Mar. But oppresses
Men: howsoever let him have *my* thanks
For the only boon I would have ask'd or taken
From him or such as he is.
Lor. He receives them
As they are offer'd.
Mar. May they thrive with him
So much! — no more.
Jac. Fos. Is this, sir, your whole mission?
Because we have brief time for preparation,
And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.
Mar. Nobler!

Lor. How nobler?
Mar. As more generous!
We say the "generous steed" to express the purity
Of his high blood. Thus much I 've learnt, although
Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),
From those Venetians who have skimm'd the coasts
Of Egypt, and her neighbour Araby:
And why not say as soon the "*generous man?*"
If race be aught, it is in qualities
More than in years; and mine, which is as old
As yours, is better in its product, nay—
Look not so stern—but get you back, and pore
Upon your genealogic tree's most green
Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there
Blush to find ancestors, who would have blush'd
For such a son—thou cold inveterate hater!
Jac. Fos. Again, Marina!
Mar. Again! *still*, Marina.
See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery?
Let him partake it!
Jac. Fos. That were difficult.
Mar. Nothing more easy. He partakes it now—
Ay, he may veil beneath a marble brow
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it.
A few brief words of truth shame the devil's servants
No less than master; I have probed his soul
A moment, as the eternal fire, ere long,
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks from me!
With death, and chains, and exile in his hand
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit;
They are his weapons, not his armour, for

I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,
And he but live, for him the very worst
Of destinies: each day secures him more
His tempter's.

Jac. Fos. This is mere insanity.

Mar. It may be so; and *who* hath made us *mad?*

Lor. Let her go on; it irks not me.

Mar. That's false!
You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs! You came
To be sued to in vain—to mark our tears,
And hoard our groans—to gaze upon the wreck
Which you have made a prince's son—my husband;
In short, to trample on the fallen—an office
The hangman shrinks from, as all men from him!
How have you sped? We are wretched, signor, as
Your plots could make, and vengeance could desire us,
And how *feel you?*

Lor. As rocks.

Mar. By thunder blasted:
They feel not, but no less are shiver'd. Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone. (1)

(1) [If the two Foscari do nothing to defeat the machinations of their remorseless foe, Marina, the wife of the younger, at least revenges them, by letting loose the venom of her tongue upon their hateful oppressor, which she does without stint or measure; and in a strain of vehemence not inferior to that of the old queen Margaret in Richard the Third.—JEFFREY.]

Enter the DOGE.

Jac. Fos. My father!

Doge (*embracing him*). Jacopo! my son—my son!

Jac. Fos. My father still! How long it is since I
Have heard thee name my name—*our* name!

Doge. My boy!
Couldst thou but know——

Jac. Fos. I rarely, sir, have murmur'd.

Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.

Mar. Doge, look there!
[*She points to* LOREDANO.

Doge. I see the man—what mean'st thou?

Mar. Caution!

Lor. Being
The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

Mar. Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice:
As such I recommend it, as I would
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long
Known Loredano.

Lor. You may know him better.

Mar. Yes; *worse* he could not.

Jac. Fos. Father, let not these
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it—is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?

Doge. You behold
These white hairs!

Jac. Fos. And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father!

I loved you ever—never more than now.
Look to my children—to your last child's children:
Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.
May I not see *them* also?
Mar. No—not *here.*
Jac. Fos. They might behold their parent any where.
Mar. I would that they beheld their father in
A place which would not mingle fear with love,
To freeze their young blood in its natural current.
They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that
Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well,
I know his fate may one day be their heritage,
But let it only be their *heritage,*
And not their present fee. Their senses, though
Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;
And these vile damps, too, and yon *thick green* wave
Which floats above the place where we now stand—
A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,
Might strike them: *this is not their* atmosphere,
However you—and you—and, most of all,
As worthiest—*you,* sir, noble Loredano!
May breathe it without prejudice.
Jac. Fos. I have not
Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.
I shall depart, then, without meeting them?
Doge. Not so: they shall await you in my chamber
Jac. Fos. And must I leave them—*all?*
Lor. You must.
Jac. Fos. Not one?
Lor. They are the state's.

Mar. I thought they had been mine.
Lor. They are, in all maternal things.
Mar. That is,
In all things painful. If they 're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die,
To me to bury and to mourn; but if
They live, they 'll make you soldiers, senators,
Slaves, exiles—what *you* will; or if they are
Females with portions, brides and *bribes* for nobles!
Behold the state's care for its sons and mothers!
Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.
Jac. Fos. How know you that here, where the genial wind
Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?
Lor. 'T was so
When I came here. The galley floats within
A bow-shot of the "Riva di Schiavoni."
Jac. Fos. Father! I pray you to precede me, and
Prepare my children to behold their father.
Doge. Be firm, my son!
Jac. Fos. I will do my endeavour.
Mar. Farewell! at least to this detested dungeon,
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.
Lor. And present
Liberation.
Doge. He speaks truth.
Jac. Fos. No doubt! but 'tis
Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.
He knows this, or he had not sought to change them.
But I reproach not.
Lor. The time narrows, signor.

Jac. Fos. Alas! I little thought so lingeringly
To leave abodes like this: but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and——

Doge. Boy! no tears.

Mar. Let them flow on: he wept not on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame him now.
They will relieve his heart—that too kind heart—
And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep now,
But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. Doge, lead the way.

Lor. (*to the Familiar*). The torch, there!

Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.

Doge. My son, you are feeble; take this hand.

Jac. Fos. Alas!
Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?

Lor. Take mine.

Mar. Touch it not, Foscari; 'twill sting you. Signor,
Stand off! be sure, that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we are plunged,
No hand of ours would stretch itself to meet it.
Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar gave you;
It could not save, but will support you ever.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Ducal Palace.

Enter LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Bar. And have you confidence in such a project?
Lor. I have.
Bar. 'Tis hard upon his years.
Lor. Say rather
Kind to relieve him from the cares of state.
Bar. 'T will break his heart.
Lor. Age has no heart to break.
He has seen his son's half broken, and, except
A start of feeling in his dungeon, never
Swerved.
Bar. In his countenance, I grant you, never;
But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief
Had nought to envy him within. Where is he?
Lor. In his own portion of the palace, with
His son, and the whole race of Foscaris.
Bar. Bidding farewell.
Lor. A last. As soon he shall
Bid to his dukedom.
Bar. When embarks the son?
Lor. Forthwith—when this long leave is taken. 'Tis
Time to admonish them again.
Bar. Forbear;
Retrench not from their moments.

Lor. Not I, now
We have higher business for our own. This day
Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment,
And that is vengeance.

Bar. In my mind, too deep.

Lor. 'Tis moderate—not even life for life, the rule
Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.

Bar. Did not the Doge deny this strongly?

Lor. Doubtless.

Bar. And did not this shake your suspicion?

Lor. No.

Bar. But if this deposition should take place
By our united influence in the Council,
It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds.

Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for aught
I care, depute the Council on their knees,
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope,) to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.

Bar. What, if he will not?

Lor. We 'll elect another,
And make him null.

Bar. But will the laws uphold us?

Lor. What laws?—"The Ten" are laws; and if they were not,
I will be legislator in this business.

Bar. At your own peril?

Lor. There is none, I tell you,
Our powers are such.

Bar. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.
Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.
Bar. Unask'd?
Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances:
If they were from his heart, he may be thankful:
If not, 't will punish his hypocrisy.
Come, they are met by this time; let us join them,
And be *thou* fix'd in purpose for this once.
I have prepared such arguments as will not
Fail to move them, and to remove him: since
Their thoughts, their objects, have been sounded, do
You, with your wonted scruples, teach us pause, [not
And all will prosper.
Bar. Could I but be certain
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.
Lor. He is safe, I tell you;
His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them: 'tis his throne
Alone is aim'd at.
Bar. But discarded princes
Are seldom long of life.
Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.
Bar. And why not wait these few years?
Lor. Because we have waited long enough, and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! in to council!
[*Exeunt* LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Enter MEMMO *and a Senator.*

Sen. A summons to "the Ten!" Why so?
Mem. "The Ten"
Alone can answer; they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are summon'd—
That is enough.
Sen. For them, but not for us;
I would know why.
Mem. You will know why anon,
If you obey; and, if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obey'd.
Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, *but*——
Mem. In Venice "*but*" 's a traitor.
But me no "*buts*," unless you would pass o'er
The Bridge which few repass.
Sen. I am silent.
Mem. Why
Thus hesitate? "The Ten" have call'd in aid
Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the senate—you are one,
And I another; and it seems to me
Both honour'd by the choice or chance which leads
To mingle with a body so august. [us
Sen. Most true. I say no more.
Mem. As we hope, signor,
And all may honestly, (that is, all those
Of noble blood may,) one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the senate's
Chosen delegates, a school of wisdom, to

Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.
Sen. Let us view them: they,
No doubt, are worth it.
Mem. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are worth
Something, at least to you or me.
Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.
Mem. Let us not
Be latest in obeying "the Ten's" summons.
Sen. All are not met, but I am of your thought
So far—let's in.
Mem. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils—we will not be least so.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI, *and* MARINA.

Jac. Fos. Ah, father! though I must and will depart,
Yet—yet—I pray you to obtain for me
That I once more return unto my home, (1)
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annex'd they please,
But let me still return.

(1) ["Unnerved, and now unsettled in his mind
From long and exquisite pain, he sobs and cries,
Kissing the old man's cheek, 'Help me, my Father!
Let me, I pray thee, live once more among ye:
Let me go home.'—'My son,' returns the Doge,
Mastering his grief, 'if thou art indeed my son,
Obey. Thy country wills it.'"—ROGERS.]

Doge. Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our country's will: 'tis not
For us to look beyond.
Jac. Fos. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.
Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less so
Now you are last; but did the state demand
The exile of the disinterred ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting round
To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty.
Mar. My husband! let us on: this but prolongs
Our sorrow.
Jac. Fos. But we are not summon'd yet;
The galley's sails are not unfurl'd: — who knows?
The wind may change.
Mar. And if it do, it will not
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the galley's oars
Will quickly clear the harbour.
Jac. Fos. O, ye elements!
Where are your storms?
Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?
Jac. Fos. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for prosperous
And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,

And waken Auster, sovereign of the tempest!
Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which skirt
The land I love, and never shall see more!

Mar. And wish you this with *me* beside you?

Jac. Fos. No—
No—not for thee, too good, too kind! May'st thou
Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of heaven howl down the Gulf,
And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appall'd, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them, as an offering
To appease the waves. The billow which destroys
Will be more merciful than man, and bear me, [me
Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave.
From fishers' hands upon the desolate strand,
Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er received
One lacerated like the heart which then
Will be—But wherefore breaks it not? why live I?

Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with time, to master
Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one: why
What is this to the things thou hast borne in silence—
Imprisonment and actual torture?

Jac. Fos. Double,
Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are right,
It must be borne. Father, your blessing.

Doge. Would
It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.
Jac. Fos. Forgive ——
Doge. What?
Jac. Fos. My poor mother, for my birth,
And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestow'd upon me as my sire.
Mar. What hast thou done?
Jac. Fos. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chasten'd and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter!
Mar. Fear not: *that*'s reserved
For your oppressors.
Jac. Fos. Let me hope not.
Mar. Hope not?
Jac. Fos. I cannot wish them *all* they have inflicted.
Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A thousand fold
May the worm which ne'er dieth feed upon them!
Jac. Fos. They may repent.
Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

Offi. Signor! the boat is at the shore — the wind
Is rising — we are ready to attend you.

Jac. Fos. And I to be attended. Once more, father!
Your hand!

Doge. Take it. Alas! how thine own trembles!

Jac. Fos. No—you mistake; 'tis yours that shakes
my father.
Farewell!

Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?

Jac. Fos. No—nothing
[*To the Officer.*
Lend me your arm, good signor.

Offi. You turn pale—
Let me support you—paler—ho! some aid there!
Some water!

Mar. Ah, he is dying!

Jac. Fos. Now, I'm ready—
My eyes swim strangely—where's the door?

Mar. Away
Let me support him—my best love! Oh, God!
How faintly beats this heart—this pulse!

Jac. Fos. The light
Is it the light?—I am faint.
[*Officer presents him with water.*

Offi. He will be better,
Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fos. I doubt not. Father—wife—
Your hands!

Mar. There 's death in that damp clammy grasp.
Oh God!—My Foscari, how fare you?

Jac. Fos. Well!
[*He dies.*

Offi. He's gone!

Doge. He's free.

Mar. No — no, he is not dead; (1)
There must be life yet in that heart — he could not
Thus leave me.

Doge. Daughter!

Mar. Hold thy peace, old man!
I am no daughter now — thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari!

Offi. We must remove the body.

Mar. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your base office
Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his remains
To those who know to honour them.

Offi. I must
Inform the signory, and learn their pleasure.

Doge. Inform the signory, from *me*, the Doge,
They have no further power upon those ashes:
While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject —
Now he is *mine* — my broken-hearted boy!

[*Exit Officer.*

Mar. And I must live!

Doge. Your children live, Marina.

(1) ——["Generous as brave;
Affection, kindness, the sweet offices
Of duty and love were from his tenderest years
To him as needful as his daily bread:
And to become a by-word in the streets,
Bringing a stain on those who gave him life,
And those, alas! now worse than fatherless —
To be proclaimed a ruffian, a night-stabber,
He on whom none before had breathed reproach —
He lived but to disprove it. That hope lost,
Death follow'd. Oh, if justice be in Heaven,
A day must come of ample retribution!" — ROGERS.]

Mar. My children! true — they live, and I must
To bring them up to serve the state, and die [live
As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings
Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so?

Doge. My unhappy children!

Mar. What!
You feel it then at last — *you!* — Where is now
The stoic of the state?

Doge (*throwing himself down by the body*). *Here!*

Mar. Ay, weep on!
I thought you had no tears — you hoarded them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more — never, never more.

Enter LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Lor. What 's here?

Mar. Ah! the devil come to insult the dead!
Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground.
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

Bar. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But pass'd here merely on our path from council.

Mar. Pass on.

Lor. We sought the Doge.

Mar. (*pointing to the Doge, who is still on the ground by his son's body*). He 's busy, look,
About the business *you* provided for him.
Are ye content?

Bar. We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.

Mar. No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.
Doge (*rising*). Sirs, I am ready.
Bar. No—not now.
Lor. Yet 'twas important.
Doge. If 'twas so, I can
Only repeat—I am ready.
Bar. It shall not be
Just now, though Venice totter'd o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.
Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you bring
Are evil, you may say them; nothing further
Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there;
If they be good, say on; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.
Bar. I would they could!
Doge. I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.
Mar. Ah! I thought it would be so.
Doge. What mean you?
Mar. Lo! there is the blood beginning
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari—
The body bleeds in presence of the assassin.
[*To* LOREDANO.
Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How death itself bears witness to thy deeds!
Doge. My child! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body. [*To his attendants.*] Signors, if it please you,
Within an hour I'll hear you.
[*Exeunt* DOGE, MARINA, *and attendants with the body. Manent* LOREDANO *and* BARBARIGO.

Bar. He must not
Be troubled now.
Lor. He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble farther.
Bar. These are words;
But grief is lonely, and the breaking in
Upon it barbarous.
Lor. Sorrow preys upon
Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world
Than calling it at moments back to this.
The busy have no time for tears.
Bar. And therefore
You would deprive this old man of all business?
Lor. The thing's decreed. The Giunta and "the Ten"
Have made it law—who shall oppose that law?
Bar. Humanity!
Lor. Because his son is dead?
Bar. And yet unburied.
Lor. Had we known this when
The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not—once past.
Bar. I'll not consent.
Lor. You have consented to
All that's essential—leave the rest to me.
Bar. Why press his abdication now?
Lor. The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit; and what the state
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.

Bar. You have a son.
Lor. I *have*—and *had* a father.
Bar. Still so inexorable?
Lor. Still.
Bar. But let him
Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.
Lor. Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle—I consent. Men may,
Even aged men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal; he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious maladies.
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.
His sons—and he had four—are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.
Bar. And art thou sure
He dealt in such?
Lor. Most sure.
Bar. And yet he seems
All openness.
Lor. And so he seem'd not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.
Bar. The attainted
And foreign traitor?
Lor. Even so: when *he*,
After the very night in which "the Ten"
(Join'd with the Doge) decided his destruction,

Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him
"The good day or good night?" his Doge-ship answer'd,
"That he in truth had pass'd a night of vigil,
"In which (he added with a gracious smile),
"There often has been question about you." (1)
'Twas true; the question was the death resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;
And the old Doge, who knew him doom'd, smiled on him [hand—
With deadly cozenage, eight long months before-
Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmagnuola
Is dead; so is young Foscari and his brethren—
I never *smiled* on *them.*

Bar. Was Carmagnuola
Your friend?

Lor. He was the safeguard of the city.
In early life its foe, but in his manhood,
Its saviour first, then victim.

Bar. Ah! that seems
The penalty of saving cities. He
Whom we now act against not only saved
Our own, but added others to her sway.

Lor. The Romans (and we ape them) gave a crown
To him who took a city; and they gave
A crown to him who saved a citizen
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken

(1) An historical fact. See *Daru*, tom. ii.

By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroy'd by him, or *through* him, the account
Were fearfully against him, although narrow'd
To private havoc, such as between him
And my dead father.

Bar. Are you then thus fix'd?

Lor. Why, what should change me?

Bar. That which changes me:
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplish'd, when
The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
His sons all dead, his family depress'd,
And you and yours triumphant, shall you sleep?

Lor. More soundly.

Bar. That 's an error, and you'll find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.

Lor. They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing towards
The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.

Bar. Fancy's distemperature! There is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than Hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart.

Enter an Officer.

Lor. Where go you, sirrah?

Offi. By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

Bar. Their
Vault has been often open'd of late years.
Lor. 'Twill be full soon, and may be closed for ever.
Offi. May I pass on?
Lor. You may.
Bar. How bears the Doge
This last calamity?
Offi. With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then;
And once or twice I heard him, from the adjoining
Apartment mutter forth the words—"My son!"
Scarce audibly. I must proceed. [*Exit Officer.*
Bar. This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favour.
Lor. Right!
We must be speedy: let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey
The council's resolution.
Bar. I protest
Against it at this moment.
Lor. As you please—
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine.
[*Exeunt* BARBARIGO *and* LOREDANO.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The DOGE'S *Apartment.*

The DOGE *and Attendants.*

Att. My lord, the deputation is in waiting;
But add, that if another hour would better
Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

Doge. To me all hours are like. Let them approach. [*Exit Attendant.*

An Officer. Prince! I have done your bidding.

Doge. What command?

Offi. A melancholy one—to call the attendance
Of——

Doge. True—true—true: I crave your pardon. I
Begin to fail in apprehension, and
Wax very old—old almost as my years.
Till now I fought them off, but they begin
To overtake me.

Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of the Signory and the Chief of the Ten.

Noble men, your pleasure!

Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council doth condole
With the Doge on his late and private grief.

Doge. No more—no more of that.

Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke
Accept the homage of respect?

Doge. I do
Accept it as 'tis given—proceed.

Chief of the Ten. "The Ten,"
With a selected giunta from the senate
Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,
Having deliberated on the state
Of the republic, and the o'erwhelming cares
Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress
Your years, so long devoted to your country,
Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,
Now to solicit from your wisdom (which
Upon reflection must accord in this),
The resignation of the ducal ring.
Which you have worn so long and venerably:
And to prove that they are not ungrateful nor
Cold to your years and services, they add
An appanage of twenty hundred golden
Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid
Than should become a sovereign's retreat.

Doge. Did I hear rightly?

Chief of the Ten. Need I say again?

Doge. No.—Have you done?

Chief of the Ten. I have spoken. Twenty-four
Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

Doge. I shall not need so many seconds.

Chief of the Ten. We
Will now retire.

Doge. Stay! Four and twenty hours
Will alter nothing which I have to say.

Chief of the Ten. Speak!

Doge. When I twice before reiterated
My wish to abdicate, it was refused me:
And not alone refused, but ye exacted
An oath from me that I would never more

new this instance. I have sworn to die
full exertion of the functions, which
r country call'd me here to exercise,
cording to my honour and my conscience—
annot break *my* oath.
Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not
the alternative of a decree,
tead of your compliance.
Doge. Providence
)longs my days to prove and chasten me;
t ye have no right to reproach my length
days, since every hour has been the country's.
m ready to lay down my life for her,
I have laid down dearer things than life:
t for my dignity—I hold it of
e *whole* republic; when the *general* will
manifest, then you shall all be answer'd. (1)
Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer;
ail you aught. [but it cannot

) ["Then was thy cup, old man, full to the brim.
But thou wert yet alive; and there was one,
The soul and spring of all that enmity,
Who would not leave thee; fastening on thy flank,
Hungering and thirsting, still unsatisfied;
One of a name illustrious as thine own!
One of the Ten! one of the Invisible Three!
'Twas Loredano. When the whelps were gone,
He would dislodge the Lion from his den;
And, leading on the pack he long had led,
The miserable pack that ever howl'd
Against fallen Greatness, moved that Foscari
Be Doge no longer; urging his great age;
Calling the loneliness of grief, neglect
Of duty, sullenness against the laws.
—'I am most willing to retire,' said he:
'But I have sworn, and cannot of myself.
Do with me as ye please.'"—Rogers.]

Doge. I can submit to all things,
But nothing will advance; no, not a moment.
What you decree—decree.

Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we
Return to those who sent us?

Doge. You have heard me.

Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we retire. [*Exeunt the Deputation, &c.*

Enter an Attendant.

Att. My lord,
The noble dame Marina craves an audience.

Doge. My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My lord, if I intrude—
Perhaps you fain would be alone?

Doge. Alone
Alone, come all the world around me, I
Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

Mar. We will, and for the sake of those who are,
Endeavour——Oh my husband!

Doge. Give it way;
I cannot comfort thee.

Mar. He might have lived,
So form'd for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved; the native of
Another land, and who so blest and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.

Doge. Or a prince's son.

Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to other men's
Imperfect happiness or high ambition,
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly.
The country and the people whom he loved,
The prince of whom he was the elder born,
And——

Doge. Soon may be a prince no longer.

Mar. How?

Doge. They have taken my son from me, and now aim
At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws?

Mar. Oh the tyrants!
In such an hour too!

Doge. 'Tis the fittest time;
An hour ago I should have felt it.

Mar. And
Will you not now resent it?—Oh for vengeance!
But he, who, had he been enough protected,
Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.

Doge. Nor should do so
Against his country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that——

Mar. They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman:
To me my husband and my children were
Country and home. I loved *him*—how I loved him!
I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
The old martyrs would have shrunk from: he is gone,
And I, who would have given my blood for him,
Have nought to give but tears! But could I compass

The retribution of his wrongs!—Well, well;
I have sons, who shall be men.

Doge. Your grief distracts you.

Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when I saw him
Bow'd down by such oppression; yes, I thought
That I would rather look upon his corse
Than his prolong'd captivity:—I am punish'd
For that thought now. Would I were in his grave!

Doge. I must look on him once more.

Mar. Come with me!

Doge. Is he———

Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier.

Doge. And he is in his shroud!

Mar. Come, come, old man!

[*Exeunt the* DOGE *and* MARINA.

Enter BARBARIGO *and* LOREDANO.

Bar. (*to an Attendant*). Where is the Doge?

Att. This instant retired hence
With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

Lor. Where?

Att. To the chamber where the body lies.

Bar. Let us return, then.

Lor. You forget, you cannot.
We have the implicit order of the Giunta
To await their coming here, and join them in
Their office: they'll be here soon after us.

Bar. And will they press their answer on the Doge?

Lor. 'Twas his own wish that all should be done promptly.
He answer'd quickly, and must so be answer'd;

His dignity is look'd to, his estate
Cared for—what would he more?
Bar. Die in his robes
He could not have lived long; but I have done
My best to save his honours, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me hither?
Lor. 'Twas fit that some one of such different thoughts
From ours should be a witness, lest false tongues
Should whisper that a harsh majority
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.
Bar. And not less, I must needs think, for the sake
Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in
Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating;*
'Tis thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes), to you
I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in
Your Giunta's duties.
Lor. How!—*my* Giunta!
Bar. *Yours!*
They speak your language, watch your nod, approve
Your plans, and do your work. Are they not *yours?*
Lor. You talk unwarily. 'Twere best they hear
This from you. [not
Bar. Oh! they'll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine; they have gone beyond
Even their exorbitance of power: and when

This happens in the most contemn'd and abject
States, stung humanity will rise to check it.
Lor. You talk but idly.
Bar. That remains for proof.
Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence.
Att. He shall be inform'd.
[*Exit Attendant.*
Bar. The Duke is with his son.
Chief of the Ten. If it be so,
We will remit him till the rites are over.
Let us return. 'Tis time enough to-morrow.
Lor. (*aside to Bar.*) Now the rich man's hell-fire upon your tongue,
Unquench'd, unquenchable! I'll have it torn
From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter
Nothing but sobs through blood, for this! Sage signors,
I pray ye be not hasty. [*Aloud to the others.*
Bar. But be human!
Lor. See, the Duke comes!

Enter the DOGE.

Doge. I have obey'd your summons.
Chief of the Ten. We come once more to urge our past request.
Doge. And I to answer.
Chief of the Ten. What?

Doge. My only answer.
You have heard it.
Chief of the Ten. Hear *you* then the last decree,
Definitive and absolute!
Doge. To the point—
To the point! I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts—Go on!
Chief of the Ten. You are no longer Doge; you are released
From your imperial oath as sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for
Your services, the state allots the appanage
Already mention'd in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.
Doge. That last clause,
I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury.
Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke!
Lor. Your answer, Francis Foscari!
Doge. If I could have foreseen that my old age
Was prejudicial to the state, the chief
Of the republic never would have shown
Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being rendered, I obey. (1)
Chief of the Ten. If you would have the three days named extended.

(1) [MS. — "The act is passed — I will obey it.]

We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.
Doge. Not eight hours, signor,
Nor even eight minutes—There's the ducal ring,
[*Taking off his ring and cap.*
And there the ducal diadem. And so
The Adriatic's free to wed another.
Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so quickly.
Doge. I am old, sir,
And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst you
A face I know not—Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!
Mem. Signor,
I am the son of Marco Memmo. (1)
Doge. Ah!
Your father was my friend.—But *sons* and *fathers!*—
What, ho! my servants there!
Atten. My prince!
Doge. No prince—
There are the princes of the prince! [*Pointing to the Ten's Deputation.*]—Prepare
To part from hence upon the instant.
Chief of the Ten. Why
So rashly? 'twill give scandal.

(1) ["He was deposed,
He, who had reign'd so long and gloriously;
His ducal bonnet taken from his brow,
His robes stript off, his seal and signet-ring
Broken before him. But now nothing moved
The meekness of his soul. All things alike!
Among the six that came with the decree,
Foscari saw one he knew not, and enquired
His name. 'I am the son of Marco Memmo,'
'Ah!' he replied, 'thy father was my friend!'"—ROGERS.]

Doge. Answer that;
[*To the Ten.*
It is your province.—Sirs, bestir yourselves:
[*To the Servants.*
There is one burthen which I beg you bear
With care, although 'tis past all farther harm—
But I will look to that myself.
Bar. He means
The body of his son.
Doge. And call Marina,
My daughter!

Enter MARINA.

Doge. Get thee ready, we must mourn
Elsewhere.
Mar. And every where.
Doge. True; but in freedom,
Without these jealous spies upon the great.
Signors, you may depart: what would you more?
We are going: do you fear that we shall bear
The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
As *old* as I am, and I'm very old,
Have served you, so have I, and I and they
Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not
To fall upon you! else they would, as erst
The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
The Israelite and his Philistine foes.
Such power I do believe there might exist
In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good signors!
May the next duke be better than the present.
Lor. The *present* duke is Paschal Malipiero.

Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of these doors.

Lor. Saint Mark's great bell is soon about to toll
For his inauguration.

Doge. Earth and heaven!
Ye will reverberate this peal; and I
Live to hear this!—the first doge who e'er heard
Such sound for his successor: Happier he,
My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero—
This insult at the least was spared him.

Lor. What!
Do you regret a traitor?

Doge. No—I merely
Envy the dead.

Chief of the Ten. My lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the state's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you towards
The landing-place of the canal.

Doge. No. I
Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted
To sovereignty — the Giants' Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested duke.
My services have called me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.
There five and thirty years ago was I
Install'd, and traversed these same halls, from which
I never thought to be divorced except
A corse—a corse, it might be, fighting for them—
But not push'd hence by fellow-citizens.

But come; my son and I will go together—
He to his grave, and I to pray for mine. (1)

Chief of the Ten. What! thus in public?

Doge. I was publicly
Elected, and so will I be deposed.
Marina! art thou willing?

Mar. Here 's my arm!

Doge. And here my *staff:* thus propp'd will I go forth.

Chief of the Ten. It must not be—the people will perceive it.

Doge. The people!—There 's no people, you well know it,
Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks [you,
May shame you; but they dare not groan nor curse
Save with their hearts and eyes.

Chief of the Ten. You speak in passion,
Else——

Doge. You have reason. I have spoken much
More than my wont: it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
Inasmuch as it shows that I approach

(1) ["And now he goes. 'It is the hour and past.
I have no business here.'—'But wilt thou not
Avoid the gazing crowd? That way is private.'
'No! as I entered, so will I retire.'
And, leaning on his staff, he left the house,
His residence for five-and-thirty years,
By the same stairs up which he came in state;
Those where the giants stand, guarding the ascent,
Monstrous, terrific. At the foot he stopt,
And, on his staff still leaning, turn'd and said,
'By mine own merits did I come. I go,
Driven by the malice of mine enemies.'
Then to his boat withdrew, poor as he came,
Amid the sighs of them that dared not speak."—ROGERS.]

A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs!

Bar. You shall not depart without
An escort fitting past and present rank.
We will accompany, with due respect,
The Doge unto his private palace. Say!
My brethren, will we not?

Different voices. Ay!—Ay!

Doge. You shall not
Stir—in my train, at least. I enter'd here
As sovereign—I go out as citizen
By the same portals, but as citizen.
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes,
Pomp is for princes—I am *none!*—That's false,
I *am*, but only to these gates.—Ah!

Lor. Hark!

[*The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.*

Bar. The bell!

Chief of the Ten. St. Mark's, which tolls for the election
Of Malipiero.

Doge. Well I recognise
The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even *then* I *was not young.*

Bar. Sit down, my lord!
You tremble.

Doge. 'Tis the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.

Bar. I pray you sit. [now.

Doge. No; my seat here has been a throne till Marina! let us go.

Mar. Most readily.

Doge (*walks a few steps, then stops*). I feel athirst— will no one bring me here
A cup of water?

Bar. I——

Mar. And I——

Lor. And I——

[*The* DOGE *takes a goblet from the hand of* LOREDANO.

Doge. I take *yours*, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this. (1)

Lor. Why so?

Doge. 'Tis said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

Lor. Well, sir!

Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 'tis
An idle legend.

Mar. You talk wildly, and
Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as look'd my husband!

Bar. He sinks!—support him!—quick—a chair —support him!

Doge. The bell tolls on!—let's hence—my brain's on fire!

(1) [MS.—"I take yours, Loredano—'tis the draught Most fitting such an hour as this."]

Bar. I do beseech you, lean upon us!
Doge. No!
A sovereign should die standing. My poor boy!
Off with your arms! — *That bell!*
[*The* DOGE *drops down and dies.*(1)
Mar. My God! My God!
Bar. (*to Lor.*) Behold! your work's completed!
Chief of the Ten. Is there then
No aid? Call in assistance!
Att. 'Tis all over.
Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his obsequies
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?
Bar. He has not had
The misery to die a subject where
He reign'd: then let his funeral rites be princely.(2)

(1) [The death of the elder Foscari took place not at the palace, but in his own house; not immediately on his descent from the Giants' Stairs, but five days afterwards. "En entendant," says M. de Sismondi, "le son des cloches, qui sonnaient en actions de graces pour l'élection de son successeur, il mourut subitement d'une hémorrhagie causée par une veine qui s'éclata dans sa poitrine."*]

(2) [By a decree of the Council, the trappings of supreme power of which the Doge had divested himself while living, were restored to him when dead; and he was interred, with ducal magnificence, in the church of the Minorites, the new Doge attending as a mourner. — See DARU.]

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* "Before I was sixteen years of age," says Lord Byron, "I was witness to a melancholy instance of the same effect of mixed passions upon a young person; who, however, did not die in consequence, at that time, but fell a victim, some years afterwards, to a seizure of the same kind, arising from causes intimately connected with agitation of mind." See *Don Juan*, c. iv. st. lix. *post*.

Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?
All, except Lor. answer, Yes.
Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be with him!
Mar. Signors, your pardon: this is mockery.
Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul,
(A soul by whom you have increased your empire,
And made your power as proud as was his glory,)
You banish'd from his palace, and tore down
From his high place, with such relentless coldness;
And now, when he can neither know these honours,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, signors,
Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you trampled.
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour.
Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.
Mar. I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt) consign'd to powers which
Resemble that you exercise on earth. [may
Leave him to me; you would have done so for
His dregs of life, which you have kindly shorten'd:
It is my last of duties, and may prove
A dreary comfort in my desolation.
Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.
Chief of the Ten. Do you
Pretend still to this office?
Mar. I do, signor.

Though his possessions have been all consumed
In the state's service, I have still my dowry,
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of—— [*She stops with agitation.*

Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your children.

Mar. Ay, they are fatherless, I thank you.

Chief of the Ten. We
Cannot comply with your request. His relics
Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and follow'd
Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.

Mar. I have heard of murderers, who have inter'd
Their victims; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
Of so much splendour in hypocrisy
O'er those they slew. (1) I've heard of widows' tears—
Alas! I have shed some—always thanks to you!
I've heard of *heirs* in sables—you have left none
To the deceased, so you would act the part
Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done! as one day,
I trust, Heaven's will be done too!

Chief of the Ten. Know, you, lady,
To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech?

(1) The Venetians appear to have had a particular turn for breaking the hearts of their Doges. The following is another instance of the kind in the Doge Marco Barbarigo: he was succeeded by his brother Agostino Barbarigo, whose chief merit is here mentioned.—"Le doge, blessé de trouver constamment un contradicteur et un censeur si amer dans son frère, lui dit un jour en plein conseil: 'Messire Augustin, vous faites tout votre possible pour hâter ma mort; vous vous flattez de me succéder; mais, si les autres vous connaissent aussi-bien que je vous connais, ils n'auront garde de vous élire.' Là-dessus il se leva, ému de colère, rentra dans son appartement, et mourut quelques jours après. Ce frère, contre lequel il s'était emporté, fut précisément le successeur qu'on lui donna. C'était un mérite dont on aimait à tenir compte; surtout à un parent, de s'être mis en opposition avec le chef de la république."—DARU, *Hist. de Venise*, vol. ii. p. 533.

Mar. I know the former better than yourselves;
The latter—like yourselves; and can face both.
Wish you more funerals?

Bar. Heed not her rash words;
Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.

Chief of the Ten. We will not note them down.

Bar. (*turning to Lor. who is writing upon his tablets.*)
What art thou writing,
With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?

Lor. (*pointing to the Doge's body*). That *he* has
paid me! (1)

Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you?

Lor. A long and just one; Nature's debt and
mine. (2) [*Curtain falls.*

(1) "*L'ha pagata.*" An historical fact. See *Hist. de Venise*, par P. Daru, t. ii. p. 411.—[Here the original MS. ends. The two lines which follow, were added by Mr. Gifford. In the margin of the MS., Lord Byron has written,—"If the last line should appear obscure to those who do not recollect the historical fact mentioned in the first act of Loredano's inscription in his book, of 'Doge Foscari, debtor for the deaths of my father and uncle,' you may add the following lines to the conclusion of the last act:—

Chief of the Ten. For what has he repaid thee?
Lor. For my father's
And father's brother's death—by his son's and own!

Ask Gifford about this."—E.]

(2) ["But whence the deadly hate
That caused all this—the hate of Loredano?
It was a legacy his father left,
Who, but for Foscari, had reign'd in Venice,
And, like the venom in the serpent's bag,
Gather'd and grew!——
When his father died,
They whisper'd, 'Twas by poison!' and the words
Struck him as utter'd from his father's grave.
He wrote it on the tomb ('tis there in marble),
And with a brow of care, most merchant-like
Among the debtors in his ledger-book
Enter'd at full (nor month, nor day forgot)
'FRANCISCO FOSCARI—for my father's death,

Leaving a blank — to be fill'd up hereafter.
When Foscari's noble heart at length gave way,
He took the volume from the shelf again
Calmly, and with his pen fill'd up the blank,
Inscribing, 'He has paid me.'
Ye who sit
Brooding from day to day, from day to day
Chewing the bitter cud, and starting up
As though the hour was come to whet your fangs,
And, like the Pisan, gnaw the hairy scalp
Of him who had offended — if ye must,
'Sit and brood on; but oh, forbear to teach
The lesson to your children." — ROGERS.]

[Considered as poems, we confess that "Sardanapalus" and "The Two Foscari" appear to us to be rather heavy, verbose, and inelegant — deficient in the passion and energy which belongs to Lord Byron's other writings — and still more in the richness of imagery, the originality of thought, and the sweetness of versification for which he used to be distinguished. They are for the most part solemn, prolix, and ostentatious — lengthened out by large preparations for catastrophes that never arrive, and tantalising us with slight specimens and glimpses of a higher interest scattered thinly up and down many weary pages of pompous declamation. Along with the concentrated pathos and homestruck sentiments of his former poetry, the noble author seems also — we cannot imagine why — to have discarded the spirited and melodious versification in which they were embodied, and to have formed to himself a measure equally remote from the spring and vigour of his former compositions, and from the softness and inflexibility of the ancient masters of the drama. There are some sweet lines, and many of great weight and energy; but the general march of the verse is cumbrous and unmusical. His lines do not vibrate like polished lances, at once strong and light, in the hands of his persons, but are wielded like clumsy batons in a bloodless affray. Instead of the graceful familiarity and idiomatical melodies of Shakspeare, it is apt, too, to fall into clumsy prose, in its approaches to the easy and colloquial style; and, in the loftier passages, is occasionally deformed by low and common images that harmonise but ill with the general solemnity of the diction. — JEFFREY.]

THE

DEFORMED TRANSFORMED;

A DRAMA. (1)

(1) [This drama was begun at Pisa in 1821, but was not published till January, 1824. Mr. Medwin says, —

"On my calling on Lord Byron one morning, he produced the 'Deformed Transformed.' Handing it to Shelley, as he was in the habit of doing his daily compositions, he said — 'Shelley, I have been writing a Faustish kind of drama: tell me what you think of it.' After reading it attentively, Shelley returned it. 'Well,' said Lord B. 'how do you like it?' 'Least,' replied he, 'of any thing I ever saw of yours. It is a bad imitation of 'Faust,' and besides, there are two entire lines of Southey's in it.' Lord Byron changed colour immediately, and asked hastily, 'what lines?' Shelley repeated,

'And water shall see thee,
And fear thee, and flee thee.'

They are in the 'Curse of Kehama.' His Lordship instantly threw the poem into the fire. He seemed to feel no chagrin at seeing it consume — at least his countenance betrayed none, and his conversation became

more gay and lively than usual. Whether it was hatred of Southey, or respect for Shelley's opinion, which made him commit the act that I considered a sort of suicide, was always doubtful to me. I was never more surprised than to see, two years afterwards, 'The Deformed Transformed' announced (supposing it to have perished at Pisa); but it seems that he must have had another copy of the manuscript, or that he had re-written it perhaps, without changing a word, except omitting the Kehama lines. His memory was remarkably retentive of his own writings. I believe he could have quoted almost every line he ever wrote."

Mrs. Shelley, whose copy of "The Deformed Transformed" lies before us, has written as follows on the fly-leaf: —

"This had long been a favourite subject with Lord Byron. I think that he mentioned it also in Switzerland. I copied it — he sending a portion of it at a time, as it was finished, to me. At this time he had a great horror of its being said that he plagiarised, or that he studied for ideas, and wrote with difficulty. Thus, he gave Shelley Aikin's edition of the British Poets, that it might not be found in his house by some English lounger, and reported home: thus, too, he always dated when he began and when he ended a poem, to prove hereafter how quickly it was done. I do not think that he altered a line in this drama after he had once written it down. He composed and corrected in his mind. I do not know how he meant to finish it; but he said himself that the whole conduct of the story was already conceived. It was at this time that a brutal paragraph alluding to his lameness appeared, which he repeated to me; lest I should hear it first from some one else. No action of Lord Byron's life — scarce a line he has written — but was influenced by his personal defect." — E.]

THIS production is founded partly on the story of a novel called "The Three Brothers," (1) published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis's "Wood Demon" was also taken—and partly on the "Faust" of the great Goethe. The present publication contains the two first Parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may perhaps appear hereafter.

(1) [The "Three Brothers" is a romance, published in 1803, the work of a Joshua Pickersgill, junior. It is one of those high-flown histories, in which "terror petrific or annihilative" (we use Mr. P.'s own phraseology) waylays us at every page. The present story is that of a misshapen youth, who acquires beauty and strength by a compact with the enemy of mankind. The tenure by which he holds these gifts is bloodshed, to be perpetrated on some occasion not yet disclosed, for the drama is unfinished. In some points of character and situation he is not wholly unlike the "Black Dwarf"* of Mucklestane Moor, and we could almost suspect that the painter of that personage had condescended †, like Lord Byron, to adopt a thought from the forgotten legend of the "Three Brothers."—CROLY.]

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* ["The 'Black Dwarf' I have read with great pleasure, and perfectly understand *now* why my sister and aunt are so very positive in the very erroneous persuasion that they must have been written by me. If you knew me as well as they do, you would have fallen, perhaps, into the same mistake."—*Lord Byron to Mr. M.*]

† ["The ideal being who is here presented as residing in solitude, and haunted by a consciousness of his own deformity, and a suspicion of his being generally subjected to the scorn of his fellow-men, is not altogether imaginary. An individual existed many years since, under the author's observation, which suggested such a character. This poor unfortunate man's name was David Ritchie, a native of Tweed-dale. He was the son of a labourer in the slate-quarries of Strobo, and must have been born in the misshapen form which he exhibited, though he sometimes imputed it to ill usage when in infancy. He was a brushmaker at Edinburgh, and had wandered to several places, working at his trade, from all which he was chased by the disagreeable attention which his hideous singularity of form and face attracted wherever he came."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

STRANGER, *afterwards* CÆSAR.
ARNOLD.
BOURBON.
PHILIBERT.
CELLINI.

BERTHA.
OLIMPIA.

Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome, Priests, Peasants, &c.

THE

DEFORMED TRANSFORMED. (1)

PART I.

SCENE I.

A Forest.

Enter ARNOLD *and his mother* BERTHA.

Bert. OUT, hunchback!

Arn. I was born so, mother! (2)

(1) [A clever anonymous critic thus sarcastically opens his notice of this poem: — "The reader has no doubt often heard of the Devil and Dr. Faustus: this is but a new birth of the same unrighteous couple, who are christened, however, by the noble hierophant who presides over the infernal ceremony, — Julius Cæsar and Count Arnold. The drama opens with a scene between the latter, who is to all appearance a well-disposed young man, of a very deformed person, and his mother: this good lady, with somewhat less maternal piety about her than adorns the mother-ape in the fable, turns her dutiful incubus of a son out of doors to gather wood. Arnold, upon this, proceeds incontinently to kill himself, by falling, after the manner of Brutus, on his wood-knife: he is, however, piously dissuaded from this guilty act, by — whom does the reader think? A monk, perhaps, or a methodist preacher? no; — but by the Devil himself, in the shape of a tall black man, who rises, like an African water-god, out of a fountain. To this stranger, after the exchange of a few sinister compliments, Arnold, without more ado, sells his soul, for the privilege of wearing the beautiful form of Achilles. In the midst of all this absurdity, we still, however, recognise the master-mind of our great poet: his bold and beautiful spirit flashes at intervals through the surrounding horrors, into which he has chosen to plunge after Goethe, his *magnus Apollo.*"]

(2) [Lord Byron's own mother, when in ill humour with him, used to make the deformity in his foot the subject of taunts and reproaches. She

Bert. Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons,
The sole abortion!

Arn. Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

Bert. I would so too!
But as thou *hast*—hence, hence—and do thy best!
That back of thine may bear its burthen; 'tis
More high, if not so broad as that of others.

Arn. It *bears* its burthen;—but, my heart! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, mother?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you: nothing
Save you, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me—do not kill me!

Bert. Yes—I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of nature. But get hence,
And gather wood!

Arn. I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are
So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me:
Our milk has been the same.

Bert. As is the hedgehog's,
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds

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would (we quote from a letter written by one of her relations in Scotland) pass from passionate caresses to the repulsion of actual disgust; then devour him with kisses again, and swear his eyes were as beautiful as his father's. —QUAR. REV.]

The nipple next day sore and udder dry.(1)
Call not thy brothers brethren! Call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out!
[*Exit* BERTHA.

Arn. (*solus*). Oh mother!——She is gone, and I
Her bidding;—wearily but willingly [must do
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[ARNOLD *begins to cut wood: in doing this he wounds one of his hands.*

My labour for the day is over now.
Accursed be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home—What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind—not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed too
Like them? Oh that each drop which falls to earth
Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung
Or that the devil, to whom they liken me, [me!
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
His form, why not his power? Is it because
I have not his will too? For one kind word
From her who bore me would still reconcile me
Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.

[ARNOLD *goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand: he starts back.*

(1) [This is now generally believed to be a vulgar error; the smallness of the animal's mouth rendering it incapable of the mischief laid to its charge. For a very amusing controversy on the subject, see *Gent. Mag.* vols. lxxx. and lxxxi.]

They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me,
What she hath made me. I will not look on it
Again, and scarce dare think on't. Hideous wretch
That I am! The very waters mock me with
My horrid shadow—like a demon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein. [*He pauses.*
And shall I live on,
A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life! Thou blood,
Which flowest so freely from a scratch, let me
Try if thou wilt not in a fuller stream
Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore at once
This hateful compound of her atoms, and
Resolve back to her elements, and take
The shape of any reptile save myself,
And make a world for myriads of new worms!
This knife! now let me prove if it will sever
This wither'd slip of nature's nightshade—my
Vile form—from the creation, as it hath
The green bough from the forest.
[ARNOLD *places the knife in the ground, with the point upwards.*
Now 'tis set,
And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
Myself, and the sweet sun which warm'd me, but
In vain. The birds—how joyously they sing!
So let them, for I would not be lamented:
But let their merriest notes be Arnold's knell;
The fallen leaves my monument; the murmur

Of the near fountain my sole elegy.
Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would fall! (1)

[*As he rushes to throw himself upon the knife, his eye is suddenly caught by the fountain, which seems in motion.*

The fountain moves without a wind: but shall
The ripple of a spring change my resolve?
No. Yet it moves again! The waters stir,
Not as with air, but by some subterrane
And rocking power of the internal world.
What's here? A mist! No more? —

[*A cloud comes from the fountain. He stands gazing upon it; it is dispelled, and a tall black man comes towards him.*

Arn. What would you? Speak!
Spirit or man?

Stran. As man is both, why not
Say both in one?

Arn. Your form is man's, and yet
You may be devil.

Stran. So many men are that
Which is so call'd or thought, that you may add me
To which you please, without much wrong to either.
But come: you wish to kill yourself; —pursue
Your purpose.

Arn. You have interrupted me.

(1) [Arnold is known to us, before his temptations, only as a hunchback weary of scoffs and buffets, and more sensible of his natural disadvantages than deformed persons usually are. In a fit of passion, which resembles the splenetic resentment of Mother Sawyer, in Ford's Witch of Edmonton, rather than the consuming discontent and vague aspirations of Faust, he prepares for self-destruction. The great force of the scenes which ensue lies in the Devil's comments and repartees. — CROLY.]

Stran. What is that resolution which can e'er
Be interrupted? If I be the devil
You deem, a single moment would have made you
Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;
And yet my coming saves you.
Arn. I said not
You *were* the demon, but that your approach
Was like one.
Stran. Unless you keep company
With him (and you seem scarce used to such high
Society) you can't tell how he approaches;
And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,
And then on me, and judge which of us twain
Look likest what the boors believe to be
Their cloven-footed terror.
Arn. Do you—dare *you*
To taunt me with my born deformity?
Stran. Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary
With thy sublime of humps, the animals
Would revel in the compliment. And yet
Both beings are more swift, more strong, more mighty
In action and endurance than thyself,
And all the fierce and fair of the same kind
With thee. Thy form is natural: 'twas only
Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
The gifts which are of others upon man.
Arn. Give me the strength then of the buffalo's foot,
When he spurs high the dust, beholding his
Near enemy; or let me have the long
And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,

The helmless dromedary!—and I'll bear
Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.
Stran. I will.
Arn. (*with surprise*). Thou *canst?*
Stran. Perhaps. Would you aught else?
Arn. Thou mockest me.
Stran. Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That's poor sport, methinks.
To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar
Or wolf, or lion, leaving paltry game
To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household caldrons with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee,—
Now *I* can mock the mightiest.
Arn. Then waste not
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.
Stran. Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I am not so easily recall'd to do
Good service.
Arn. What wilt thou do for me?
Stran. Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you;
Or form you to your wish in any shape.
Arn. Oh! then you are indeed the demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.
Stran. I'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give thee
Thy choice.
Arn. On what condition?

Stran. There's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.
Arn. No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.
Stran. What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcass?
Arn. 'Tis an aspiring one, whate'er the tenement
In which it is mislodged. But name your compact:
Must it be sign'd in blood?
Stran. Not in your own.
Arn. Whose blood then?
Stran. We will talk of that hereafter.
But I'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have no bond
But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?
Arn. I take thee at thy word.
Stran. Now then!—
[*The Stranger approaches the fountain, and turns to* ARNOLD.
A little of your blood.
Arn. For what?
Stran. To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.
Arn. (*holding out his wounded arm*). Take it all.
Stran. Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.
[*The Stranger takes some of* ARNOLD'*s blood in his hand, and casts it into the fountain.*

Stran. Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!
Rise to your duty—
This is the hour!
Walk lovely and pliant
From the depth of this fountain,
As the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz Mountain.(1)
Come as ye were,
That our eyes may behold
The model in air
Of the form I will mould,
Bright as the Iris
When ether is spann'd;—
Such *his* desire is, [*Pointing to* ARNOLD.
Such my command!
Demons heroic—
Demons who wore
The form of the stoic
Or sophist of yore—
Or the shape of each victor,
From Macedon's boy
To each high Roman's picture,
Who breathed to destroy—
Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!
Up to your duty—
This is the hour!

[*Various Phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in succession before the Stranger and* ARNOLD.

(1) This is a well-known German superstition — a gigantic shadow produced by reflection on the Brocken. [The Brocken is the name of the

Arn. What do I see?

Stran. The black-eyed Roman, with
The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
Beheld a conqueror, or look'd along
The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
His, and all theirs who heir'd his very name.(1)

Arn. The phantom's bald; my quest is beauty. Could I
Inherit but his fame with his defects! [hairs.

Stran. His brow was girt with laurels more than
You see his aspect—choose it, or reject.
I can but promise you his form; his fame
Must be long sought and fought for.

Arn. I will fight too,
But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass;
His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.

Stran. Then you are far more difficult to please
Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus' mother,
Or Cleopatra at sixteen—an age

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loftiest of the Hartz mountains, a picturesque range which lies in the kingdom of Hanover. From the earliest periods of authentic history, the Brocken has been the seat of the marvellous. For a description of the phenomenon alluded to by Lord Byron, see Sir David Brewster's "Natural Magic," p. 128. — E.]

(1) ["Full in the passage of each spacious gate,
The sage Historians in white garments wait;
Graved o'er their seats the form of Time was found,
His scythe reversed, and both his pinions bound.
Within stood Heroes, who through loud alarms
In bloody fields pursued renown in arms. . . . . .
There Cæsar, graced with both Minervas, shone;—
Cæsar, the world's great master, and his own;
Unmoved, superior still in every state,
And scarce detested in his country's fate."
POPE. *Temple of Fame.**]

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* "The greatest panegyric that Cæsar ever met with, is," says Dr. Warton, "from Lord Bacon, in the Advancement of Learning, lib. i."]

When love is not less in the eye than heart.
But be it so! Shadow, pass on!

[*The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.*

Arn. And can it
Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone,
And left no footstep?

Stran. There you err. His substance
Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame
More than enough to track his memory;
But for his shadow, 'tis no more than yours,
Except a little longer and less crook'd
I' the sun. Behold another!

[*A second phantom passes.*

Arn. Who is he?

Stran. He was the fairest and the bravest of Athenians. Look upon him well.

Arn. He is
More lovely than the last. How beautiful! (1)

(1) [In one of Lord Byron's MS. Diaries we find the following passage:— "Alcibiades is said to have been 'successful in all his battles' — but *what* battles? Name them! If you mention Cæsar, or Hannibal, or Napoleon, you at once rush upon Pharsalia, Munda, Alesia, Cannæ, Thrasymene, Trebia, Lodi, Marengo, Jena, Austerlitz, Friedland, Wagram, Moskwa: but it is less easy to pitch upon the victories of Alcibiades; though they may be named too, though not so readily as the Leuctra and Mantinæa of Epaminondas, the Marathon of Miltiades, the Salamis of Themistocles, and the Thermopylæ of Leonidas. Yet, upon the whole, it may be doubted whether there be a name of antiquity which comes down with such a general charm as that of Alcibiades. Why? I cannot answer. Who can?" *

* One cannot help being struck with Lord Byron's choice of a favourite among the heroic names of antiquity. The man who was educated by Pericles, and who commanded the admiration as well as the affection of Socrates; whose gallantry and boldness were always as undisputed as the pre-eminent graces of his person and manners; who died at *forty-five*, after having been successively the delight and hero of Athens, of Sparta, of Persia; — this most versatile of great men has certainly left to the world a

Stran. Such was the curled son of Clinias;—
wouldst thou
Invest thee with his form?
Arn. Would that I had
Been born with it! But since I may choose further,
I will *look* further.
[*The shade of Alcibiades disappears.*
Stran. Lo! behold again!
Arn. What! that low, swarthy, short-nosed, round-eyed satyr,
With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
The splay feet and low stature! (1) I had better
Remain that which I am.
Stran. And yet he was
The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,

(1) ["The outside of Socrates was that o. a satyr and buffoon, but his soul was all virtue, and from within him came such divine and pathetic things, as pierced the heart, and drew tears from the hearers."—PLATO.]

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very splendid reputation. But his fame is stained with the recollections of a most profligate and debauched course of private life, and of the most complete and flagrant contempt of public principle; and it is to be hoped that there are not many men who could gravely give to the name of Alcibiades a preference, on the whole, over such an one as that of an Epaminondas or a Leonidas, or even of a Miltiades or a Hannibal. But the career of Alcibiades was *romantic*: every great event in which he had a share has the air of a personal adventure; and, whatever might be said of his want of principle, moral and political, nobody ever doubted the greatness of his powers and the brilliancy of his accomplishments. By the gift of nature, the handsomest creature of his time, and the possessor of a very extraordinary genius, he was, by accidents or by fits, a soldier, — a hero, — an orator, — and even, it should seem, a philosopher; but he played these parts only because he wished it to be thought that there was no part which he could not play. He thought of nothing but himself. His vanity entirely commanded the direction of his genius, and could even make him abandon occasionally his voluptuousness for the very opposite extreme; which last circumstance, by the way, was probably one of those that had hit Lord Byron's fancy — as indeed it may be suspected to have influenced his behaviour. — LOCKHART.]

And personification of all virtue.
But you reject him?
Arn. If his form could bring me
That which redeem'd it—no.
Stran. I have no power
To promise that; but you may try, and find it
Easier in such a form, or in your own.
Arn. No. I was not born for philosophy,
Though I have that about me which has need on't.
Let him fleet on.
Stran. Be air, thou hemlock-drinker!
[*The shadow of Socrates disappears: another rises.*
Arn. What's here? whose broad brow and whose curly beard
And manly aspect look like Hercules,
Save that his jocund eye hath more of Bacchus
Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
As if he knew the worthlessness of those
For whom he had fought.
Stran. It was the man who lost
The ancient world for love.
Arn. I cannot blame him,
Since I have risk'd my soul because I find not
That which he exchanged the earth for.
Stran. Since so far
You seem congenial, will you wear his features?
Arn. No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult,
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else on this side of the dim shore
Whence they float back before us.

Stran. Hence, triumvir!
Thy Cleopatra's waiting. (1)

[*The shade of Anthony disappears: another rises.*

Arn. Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the sun his rays — a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was *he e'er human only?* (2)

(1) ["His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck
A sun and moon; which kept their course, and lighted
The little O, the earth.
His legs bestrid the ocean: his rear'd arm
Crested the world: his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends:
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in't; an autumn 'twas
That grew the more by reaping: his delights
Were dolphin-like; they show'd his back above
The element they lived in: in his livery
Walk'd crowns, and crownets; realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.
Nature wants stuff
To vie strange forms with fancy; yet, to imagine
An Antony, were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,
Condemning shadows quite." — SHAKSPEARE.]

(2) [The beauty and mien of Demetrius Poliorcetes were so inimitable, that no statuary or painter could hit off a likeness. His countenance had a mixture of grace and dignity, and was at once amiable and awful, and the unsubdued and eager air of youth was blended with the majesty of the hero and the king. There was the same happy mixture in his behaviour, which inspired, at the same time, both pleasure and awe. In his hours of leisure, a most agreeable companion; in his talk, and every species of entertainment, of all princes the most delicate; and yet, when business called, nothing could equal his activity, his diligence, and despatch. In which respect he imitated Bacchus most of all the gods; since he was not only terrible in war, but knew how to terminate war with peace, and turn with the happiest address to the joys and pleasures which that inspires. — PLUTARCH.]

Stran. Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that form'd his urn.
Arn. Who was this glory of mankind?
Stran. The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war—
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.
Arn. Yet one shadow more.
Stran. (*addressing the shadow*). Get thee to Lamia's lap!

[*The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes: another rises.*

I'll fit you still,
Fear not, my hunchback: if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment.
Arn. Content! I will fix here.
Stran. I must commend
Your choice. The godlike son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, roll'd o'er sands of gold,
Soften'd by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vow'd to Sperchius as they were—behold them!
And *him*—as he stood by Polixena,
With sanction'd and with soften'd love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion

For the sweet downcast virgin, whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece look'd her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.

Arn. I gaze upon him
As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.

Stran. You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty, if the proverb's true
Of mortals, that extremes meet.

Arn. Come! Be quick!
I am impatient.

Stran. As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.

Arn. Must I wait?

Stran. No; that were a pity. But a word or two:
His stature is twelve cubits; would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

Arn. Why not?

Stran. Glorious ambition!
I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and yet, by being
A little less removed from present men

In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found mammoth; and their cursed engines,
Their culverins, and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armour there, with greater ease
Than the adulterer's arrow through his heel,
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize
In Styx.

Arn. Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

Stran. Thou shalt be beauteous as the thing thou seest,
And strong as what it was, and——

Arn. I ask not
For valour, since deformity is daring.(1)
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.

(1) ["Whosoever," says Lord Bacon, "hath any thing fixed in his person that doth induce contempt, hath also a perpetual spur in himself to rescue and deliver himself from scorn; therefore, all deformed persons are extreme bold; first, as in their own defence, as being exposed to scorn, but in process of time by a general habit: also it stirreth in them industry, and especially of this kind, to watch and observe the weakness of others, that they may have somewhat to repay. Again, in their superiors, it quencheth jealousy towards them, as persons that they think they may at pleasure despise: and it layeth their competitors and emulators asleep, as never believing they should be in possibility of advancement till they see them in possession: so that upon the matter, in a great wit, deformity is an advantage to rising." — *Essay*, lv.]

Stran. Well spoken! And thou doubtless wilt
remain
Form'd as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to incase
This daring soul, which could achieve no less
Without it.

Arn. Had no power presented me
The possibility of change, I would
Have done the best which spirit may to make
Its way with all deformity's dull, deadly,
Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders—
An hateful and unsightly molehill to
The eyes of happier man. I would have look'd
On beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful
Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh—
Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not love me
In turn, because of this vile crooked clog,
Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
It all, had not my mother spurn'd me from her.
The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape;—my dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley,—happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus, the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind, what courage
And perseverance could have done, perchance
Had made me something—as it has made heroes
Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me

of my own life, and quick to quit it;
who is so is the master of
er dreads to die.
. Decide between
ou have been, or will be.
I have done so.
e open'd brighter prospects to my eyes,
eter to my heart. As I am now,
be fear'd, admired, respected, loved
ave those next to me, of whom I
e beloved. As thou showest me
e of forms, I take the one I view.
haste!
. And what shall *I* wear?
Surely he
n command all forms will choose the highest,
ng superior even to that which was
now before us. Perhaps *his*
w him, that of Paris: or—still higher—
t's god, clothed in such limbs as are
lves a poetry.
. Less will content me;
o, love a change.
Your aspect is
but not uncomely.
. If I chose,
be whiter; but I have a penchant
k—it is so honest, and besides
ther blush with shame nor pale with fear;
ave worn it long enough of late,
w I'll take your figure.
Mine!

Stran. Yes. You
Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha,
You mother's offspring. People have their tastes;
You have yours—I mine.

Arn. Despatch! despatch!

Stran. Even so.

[*The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it along the turf, and then addresses the phantom of Achilles.*

Beautiful shadow
Of Thetis's boy!
Who sleeps in the meadow
Whose grass grows o'er Troy:
From the red earth, like Adam,(1)
Thy likeness I shape,
As the being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.
Thou clay, be all glowing,
Till the rose in his cheek
Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak!
Ye violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!
And thou, sunshiny water,
Of blood take the guise!
Let these hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair,
And wave o'er his brows,
As thou wavest in air!

(1) Adam means "*red earth*," from which the first man was formed.

Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!
But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!
Let his flesh be the purest
Of mould, in which grew
The lily-root surest,
And drank the best dew!
Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound,
And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found!
Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirr'd,
Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word!
Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!
'Tis done! He hath taken
His stand in creation!

[ARNOLD *falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.*

rn. (*in his new form*). I love, and I shall be beloved! Oh life!
ast I feel thee! Glorious spirit!
tran. Stop!
ıt shall become of your abandon'd garment,
hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
ch late you wore, or were?

Arn. Who cares? Let wolves
And vultures take it, if they will.
Stran. And if
They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.
Arn. Let us but leave it there;
No matter what becomes on't.
Stran. That's ungracious,
If not ungrateful. Whatsoe'er it be,
It hath sustain'd your soul full many a day.
Arn. Ay, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.
Stran. But if I give another form, it must be
By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have long
Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your interlopers. The devil may take men,
Not make them,—though he reap the benefit
Of the original workmanship:—and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.
Arn. Who would do so?
Stran. That I know not,
And therefore I must.
Arn. You!
Stran. I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.
Arn. True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.
Stran. In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow

Arn. I would be spared this.
Stran. But it cannot be.
What! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were?
Arn. Do as thou wilt.
Stran. (*to the late form of* ARNOLD, *extended on the earth.*)
Clay! not dead, but soul-less!
Though no man would choose thee,
An immortal no less
Deigns not to refuse thee.
Clay thou art; and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.
Fire! *without* which nought can live;
Fire! but *in* which nought can live,
Save the fabled salamander,
Or immortal souls, which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
Burning in a quenchless lot:
Fire! the only element
Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
Save the worm which dieth not,
Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent:
Fire! man's safeguard and his slaughter:
Fire! Creation's first-born daughter,
And Destruction's threaten'd son,
When heaven with the world hath done:
Fire! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
Stiff and cold!

His resurrection rests with me and you!
One little, marshy spark of flame—
And he again shall seem the same;
But I his spirit's place shall hold!

[*An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood and rests on the brow of the body. The Stranger disappears: the body rises.*

Arn. (*in his new form*). Oh! horrible!

Stran. (*in* ARNOLD'*s late shape*). What! tremblest thou?

Arn. Not so—
I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape
Thou lately worest?

Stran. To the world of shadows.
But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?

Arn. Must thou be my companion?

Stran. Wherefore not?
Your betters keep worse company.

Arn. *My* betters!

Stran. Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new form:
I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's well;
You improve apace;—two changes in an instant,
And you are old in the world's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you 'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?

Arn. Where the world
Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.

Stran. That 's to say, where there is war

And woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain—Italy—the new Atlantic world—
Afric, with all its Moors. In very truth,
There is small choice: the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.
Arn. I have heard great things of Rome.
Stran. A goodly choice—
And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;
For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals, are at play along
The sunny shores of the world's garden.
Arn. How
Shall we proceed?
Stran. Like gallants, on good coursers.
What ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po.
Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

Arn. A noble sight!
Stran. And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlini race of Araby,
With these!
Arn. The mighty steam, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies, wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.
Stran. Mount, my lord:
They and I are your servitors.

Arn. And these
Our dark-eyed pages—what may be their names?
Stran. You shall baptize them.
Arn. What! in holy water?
Stran. Why not? The deeper sinner, better saint.
Arn. They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be demons.
Stran. True; the devil's always ugly; and your beauty
Is never diabolical.
Arn. I'll call him
Who bears the golden horn, and wears such bright
And blooming aspect, *Huon;* for he looks
Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the other
And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not,
But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you?
Stran. I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes; but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.
Arn. More human than the shape (though it was mine once)
I trust.
Stran. Then call me Cæsar.
Arn. Why, that name
Belongs to empires, and has been but borne
By the world's lords.
Stran. And therefore fittest for

The devil in disguise—since so you deem me,
Unless you call me pope instead.
Arn. Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain Arnold still.
Cæs. We 'll add a title—
" Count Arnold :" it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a billet-doux.
Arn. Or in an order for a battle-field. [steed
Cæs. (*sings*). To horse ! to horse ! my coal-black
Paws the ground and snuffs the air !
There's not a foal of Arab's breed
More knows whom he must bear ;
On the hill he will not tire,
Swifter as it waxes higher ;
In the marsh he will not slacken,
On the plain be overtaken ;
In the wave he will not sink,
Nor pause at the brook's side to drink ;
In the race he will not pant,
In the combat he 'll not faint ;
On the stones he will not stumble,
Time nor toil shall make him humble ;
In the stall he will not stiffen,
But be winged as a griffin,
Only flying with his feet :
And will not such a voyage be sweet?
Merrily ! merrily ! never unsound,
Shall our bonny black horses skim over the ground !
From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we, or fly !
For we 'll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.
[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*

SCENE II.

A Camp before the Walls of Rome.

ARNOLD *and* CÆSAR.

Cæs. You are well entered now.

Arn. Ay; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.

Cæs. Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why!
Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France: and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been earth's lord
Under its emperors, and—changing sex,
Not sceptre, an hermaphrodite of empire—
Lady of the old world.

Arn. How *old?* What! are there
New worlds?

Cæs. To *you.* You'll find there are such shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

Arn. I'll trust them.

Cæs. Do! They will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.

Arn. Dog!

Cæs. Man!

Arn. Devil!

Cæs. Your obedient humble servant.

Arn. Say *master* rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here.
Cæs. And where wouldst *thou* be?
Arn. Oh, at peace—in peace!
Cæs. And where is that which is so? From the star
To the winding worm, all life is motion; and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die.
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fix'd necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.
Arn. And when it prospers——
Cæs. 'Tis no rebellion.
Arn. Will it prosper now?
Cæs. The Bourbon hath given orders for the assault,
And by the dawn there will be work.
Arn. Alas!
And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross,
Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him,
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge).
Cæs. 'Tis there, and shall be.
Arn. What?
Cæs. The crucifix

Above, and many altar shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls,
And harquebusses, and what not; besides
The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.

Arn. And those scarce mortal arches,
Pile above pile of everlasting wall,
The theatre where emperors and their subjects
(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon
The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood, the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust
In the arena (as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe unconquer'd);
Made even the forest pay its tribute of
Life to their amphitheatre, as well
As Dacia men to die the eternal death
For a sole instant's pastime, and "Pass on
To a new gladiator!"—Must it fall?

Cæs. The city, or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you confound
Both them and me.

Arn. To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.

Cæs. Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges;
For men must have their prey after long toil.

Arn. The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

Cæs. I saw him.

Arn. You!

Cæs. Yes, sir. You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape
And a worse name. I'm Cæsar and a hunch-back
Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a bald-head,
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory.(1) Thus
The world runs on, but we'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am)
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('t was then no wall,
Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood; and if its native blood
Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 't was yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the ocean and the earth,
Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter
For ages.

Arn. But what have these done, their far
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?

Cæs. And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept?—Hark!

Arn. They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

(1) [Suetonius relates of Julius Cæsar, that his baldness gave him much uneasiness, having often found himself, upon that account, exposed to the ridicule of his enemies; and that, therefore, of all the honours conferred upon him by the senate and people, there was none which he either accepted or used with so much pleasure as the right of wearing constantly a laurel crown.]

Cæs. And why should they not sing as well as
They are black ones, to be sure. [swans?
Arn. So, you are learn'd,
I see, too?
Cæs. In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and—were I so minded—
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.
Arn. And wherefore do you not?
Cæs. It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchymist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze,
Who fail'd and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbour.
They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth, their Koran, Talmud, their
Cabala; their best brick-work, wherewithal
They build more—— [sneerer!
Arn. (*interrupting him*). Oh, thou everlasting
Be silent! How the soldiers' rough strain seems
Soften'd by distance to a hymn-like cadence!
Listen!
Cæs. Yes. I have heard the angels sing.
Arn. And demons howl.
Cæs. And man too. Let us listen:
I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They pass'd the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a king,
We have turn'd back on no men,
And so let us sing!
Here 's the Bourbon for ever!
Though pennyless all,
We'll have one more endeavour
At yonder old wall.
With the Bourbon we'll gather
At day-dawn before
The gates, and together
Or break or climb o'er
The wall: on the ladder
As mounts each firm foot,
Our shout shall grow gladder,
And death only be mute.
With the Bourbon we'll mount o'er
The walls of old Rome,
And who then shall count o'er
The spoils of each dome?
Up! up with the lily!
And down with the keys!
In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
We'll revel at ease.
Her streets shall be gory,
Her Tiber all red,

And her temples so hoary
Shall clang with our tread.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
The Bourbon for aye!
Of our song bear the burden!
And fire, fire away!
With Spain for the vanguard,
Our varied host comes;
And next to the Spaniard
Beat Germany's drums;
And Italy's lances
Are couch'd at their mother;
But our leader from France is,
Who warr'd with his brother.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

Cæs. An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.

Arn. Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here
The general with his chiefs and men of trust. [comes
A goodly rebel!

Enter the Constable BOURBON(1) "*cum suis*," *&c.&c.*

Phil. How now, noble prince,
You are not cheerful?

(1) [Charles of Bourbon was cousin to Francis I., and Constable of France. Being bitterly persecuted by the queen-mother for having declined the honour of her hand, and also by the king, he transferred his services to the Emperor Charles V.]

Bourb. Why should I be so?

Phil. Upon the eve of conquest, such as ours,
Most men would be so.

Bourb. If I were secure!

Phil. Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of adamant,
They 'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery.

Bourb. That they will falter is my least of fears.
That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on — were those hoary walls
Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans; —
But now ——

Phil. They are but men who war with mortals.

Bourb. True: but those walls have girded in great ages.
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors; and methinks
They flit along the eternal city's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away!

Phil. So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows?

Bourb. They do not menace me. I could have faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and deathlike hands,
And with their thin aspen faces and fix'd eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there!

Phil. I look upon
A lofty battlement.
Bourb. And there!
Phil. Not even
A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Shelter'd by the gray parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.
Bourb. You are blind.
Phil. If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.
Bourb. A thousand years have mann'd the walls
With all their heroes, — the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave.
And the first Cæsar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.
Phil. Then conquer
The walls for which he conquer'd, and be greater!
Bourb. True: so I will, or perish.
Phil. You can *not.*
In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.
[*Count* ARNOLD *and* CÆSAR *advance.*
Cæs. And the mere men — do they too sweat beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory?
Bourb. Ah!
Welcome the bitter hunchback! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as beauteous,
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

Cæs. You will find,
So please your highness, no less for yourself.
Bourb. And if I do, there will not be a labourer
More forward, hunchback!
Cæs. You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back—as general,
Placed in the rear in action—but your foes
Have never seen it.
Bourb. That's a fair retort,
For I provoked it:—but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil.*
Cæs. And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.
Phil. Why so?
Cæs. One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.
Bourb. Arnold, your
Slight crooked friend's as snake-like in his words
As his deeds.
Cæs. Your highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer — I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung.
Bourb. You are brave, and that's enough for me; and quick
In speech as sharp in action — and that's more.
I am not alone a soldier, but the soldiers'
Comrade.
Cæs. They are but bad company, your highness;

And worse even for their friends than foes, as I
More permanent acquaintance.
Phil. How now, fel
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.
Cæs. You mean I speak the truth.
I'll lie — it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.
Bourb. Philibert!
Let him alone; he's brave, and ever has
Been first, with that swart face and mou
shoulder
In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of licence,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famish'd, sullen, grumbling slave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.
Cæs. It would be v
If the earth's princes ask'd no more.
Bourb. Be silen
Cæs. Ay, but not idle. Work yourself with w
You have few to speak.
Phil. What means the audacious pra
Cæs. To prate, like other prophets.
Bourb. Philibe
Why will you vex him? Have we not enough
To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

Arn. I have heard as much, my lord.
Bourb. And you will follow?
Arn. Since I must not lead.
Bourb. 'Tis necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.
Cæs. Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.
Bourb. The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hill'd city hath
Retain'd her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars,
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest,
Still the world's masters! Civilised, barbarian,
Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus
Have been the circus of an empire. Well!
'Twas *their* turn—now 'tis ours; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.
Cæs. No doubt, the camp's the school of civic rights.
What would you make of Rome?
Bourb. That which it was.
Cæs. In Alaric's time?
Bourb. No, slave! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs——
Cæs. And kings!
'Tis a great name for blood-hounds.
Bourb. There's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt never
Be serious?

Cæs. On the eve of battle, no;—
That were not soldier-like. 'Tis for the general
To be more pensive: we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think?
Our tutelar deity, in a leader's shape,
Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts!
If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
To crack those walls alone.

Bourb. You may sneer, since
'Tis lucky for you that you fight no worse for't.

Cæs. I thank you for the freedom; 'tis the only
Pay I have taken in your highness' service.

Bourb. Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay yourself.
Look on those towers; they hold my treasury:
But, Philibert, we'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.

Arn. Prince! my service
Is yours, as in the field.

Bourb. In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at daybreak.

Cæs. And mine?

Bourb. To follow glory with the Bourbon.
Good night!

Arn. (*to* CÆSAR). Prepare our armour for the assault,
And wait within my tent.

[*Exeunt* BOURBON, ARNOLD, PHILIBERT, *&c.*

Cæs. (*solus*). Within thy tent!
Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my presence?
Or that this crooked coffer, which contain'd
Thy principle of life, is aught to me

Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!
Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!
This is the consequence of giving matter
The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
Ever relapsing into its first elements.
Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 'tis
The spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
When I grow weary of it, I have business
Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem
Were made for them to look at. 'Twere a jest now
To bring one down amongst them, and set fire
Unto their anthill: how the pismires then
Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing
From tearing down each other's nests, pipe forth
One universal orison! Ha! ha! [*Exit* CÆSAR.

PART II.

SCENE I.

Before the walls of Rome. — The assault: the army in motion, with ladders to scale the walls; BOURBON, *with a white scarf over his armour, foremost.*

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

1.

'Tis the morn, but dim and dark.
Whither flies the silent lark?
Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
Is the day indeed begun?

Nature's eye is melancholy
O'er the city high and holy:
But without there is a din
Should arouse the saints within,
And revive the heroic ashes
Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
Oh ye seven hills! awaken,
Ere your very base be shaken!

2.

Hearken to the steady stamp!
Mars is in their every tramp!
Not a step is out of tune,
As the tides obey the moon!
On they march, though to self-slaughter,
Regular as rolling water,
Whose high waves o'ersweep the border
Of huge moles, but keep their order,
Breaking only rank by rank.
Hearken to the armour's clank!
Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
How he glares upon the barrier:
Look on each step of each ladder,
As the stripes that streak an adder.

3.

Look upon the bristling wall,
Mann'd without an interval!
Round and round, and tier on tier,
Cannon's black mouth, shining spear,
Lit match, bell-mouth'd musquetoon,
Gaping to be murderous soon.

All the warlike gear of old,
Mix'd with what we now behold,
In this strife 'twixt old and new,
Gather like a locusts' crew,
Shade of Remus! 'tis a time
Awful as thy brother's crime!
Christians war against Christ's shrine:—
Must its lot be like to thine?

4.

Near—and near—and nearer still,
As the earthquake saps the hill,
First with trembling, hollow motion,
Like a scarce-awaken'd ocean,
Then with stronger shock and louder,
Till the rocks are crush'd to powder,—
Onward sweeps the rolling host!
Heroes of the immortal boast!
Mighty chiefs! eternal shadows!
First flowers of the bloody meadows
Which encompass Rome, the mother
Of a people without brother!
Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
Plough the root up of your laurels?
Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
Weep not—*strike!* for Rome is mourning![1]

5.

Onward sweep the varied nations!
Famine long hath dealt their rations.

(1) Scipio, the second Africanus, is said to have repeated a verse of Homer, and wept over the burning of Carthage. He had better have granted it a capitulation.

To the wall, with hate and hunger,
Numerous as wolves, and stronger,
On they sweep. Oh! glorious city,
Must thou be a theme for pity?
Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
Alaric was a gentle foeman,
Match'd with Bourbon's black banditti!
Rouse thee, thou eternal city;
Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
With thy own hand to thy porch,
Than behold such hosts pollute
Your worst dwelling with their foot.

6.

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
Ilion's children find no Hector;
Priam's offspring loved their brother;
Rome's great sire forgot his mother,
When he slew his gallant twin,
With inexpiable sin.
See the giant shadow stride
O'er the ramparts high and wide!
When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
Its foundation mourn'd thy fall.
Now, though towering like a Babel,
Who to stop his steps are able?
Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

7.

Now they reach thee in their anger:
Fire and smoke and hellish clangour

Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
Death is in thy walls and under.
Now the meeting steel first clashes,
Downward then the ladder crashes,
With its iron load all gleaming,
Lying at its foot blaspheming!
Up again! for every warrior
Slain, another climbs the barrier.
Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
Europe's mingling gore enriches.
Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest-home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome!—
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

8.

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quench'd hearths be Até's!
Yet again, ye shadowy heroes,
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother:
'Twas the Roman curb'd the Roman;—
Brennus was a baffled foeman.
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise! for yours are holier charters!
Mighty gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling!
Mightier founders of those altars,
True and Christian,—strike the assaulters!

Tiber! Tiber! let thy torrent
Show even nature's self abhorrent.
Let each breathing heart dilated
Turn, as doth the lion baited!
Rome be crush'd to one wide tomb,
But be still the Roman's Rome!

BOURBON, ARNOLD, CÆSAR, *and others, arrive at the foot of the wall.* ARNOLD *is about to plant his ladder.*

Bourb. Hold, Arnold! I am first.
Arn. Not so, my lord.
Bourb. Hold, sir, I charge you! Follow! I am proud
Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.
[BOURBON *plants his ladder, and begins to mount.*
Now, boys! On! on!
[*A shot strikes him, and* BOURBON *falls.*
Cæs. And off!
Arn. Eternal powers!
The host will be appall'd, — but vengeance! vengeance!
Bourb. 'Tis nothing—lend me your hand.
[BOURBON *takes* ARNOLD *by the hand, and rises; but as he puts his foot on the step, falls again.*
Arnold! I am sped.
Conceal my fall—all will go well—conceal it!
Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon;
Let not the soldiers see it.
Arn. You must be
Removed; the aid of——
Bourb. No, my gallant boy;

Death is upon me. But what is *one* life?
The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.
Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,
Till they are conquerors—then do as you may.
Cæs. Would not your highness choose to kiss the cross?
We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword
May serve instead:—it did the same for Bayard.(1)
Bourb. Thou bitter slave! to name *him* at this time!
But I deserve it.
Arn. (*to* CÆSAR). Villain, hold your peace!
Cæs. What, when a Christian dies? Shall I not offer
A Christian "Vade in pace?"
Arn. Silence! Oh!
Those eyes are glazing which o'erlook'd the world,
And saw no equal.
Bourb. Arnold, should'st thou see
France——But hark! hark! the assault grows warmer—Oh!
For but an hour, a minute more of life
To die within the wall! Hence, Arnold, hence!
You lose time—they will conquer Rome without thee.
Arn. And without *thee!*
Bourb. Not so; I'll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away! and be
Victorious!

(1) [Finding himself mortally wounded, Bayard ordered one of his attendants to place him under a tree with his face towards the enemy; then fixing his eyes on the guard of his sword, which he held up instead of a cross, he addressed his prayers to God, and in this posture he calmly waited the approach of death.—ROBERTSON'S *Charles V.*]

Arn. But I must not leave thee thus.
Bourb. You must — farewell — Up! up! the world
is winning. [BOURBON *dies.*(1)
Cæs. (*to* ARNOLD). Come, count, to business.
Arn. True. I'll weep hereafter.
[ARNOLD *covers* BOURBON'*s body with a mantle, and mounts the ladder, crying*
The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!
Cæs. Good night, lord constable! thou wert a man.
[CÆSAR *follows* ARNOLD; *they reach the battlement;* ARNOLD *and* CÆSAR *are struck down.* [injured?
Cæs. A precious somerset! Is your countship
Arn. No. [*Remounts the ladder.*
Cæs. A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!
And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes them down!
His hand is on the battlement — he grasps it
As though it were an altar; now his foot
Is on it, and —— What have we here? — a Roman?
[*A man falls.*
The first bird of the covey! he has fallen
On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?
Wounded Man. A drop of water!
Cæs. Blood's the only liquid
Nearer than Tiber.

(1) [On the 1st of May, 1527, the Constable and his army came in sight of Rome, and the next morning commenced the attack. Bourbon wore a white vest over his armour, in order, he said, to be more conspicuous both to his friends and foes. He led on to the walls, and commenced a furious assault, which was repelled with equal violence. Seeing that his army began to waver, he seized a scaling-ladder from a soldier standing, and was in the act of ascending, when he was pierced by a musket-ball, and fell. Feeling that his wound was mortal, he desired that his body might be concealed from his soldiers, and instantly expired. — ROBERTSON.]

Wounded Man. I have died for Rome. [*Dies.*
Cæs. And so did Bourbon, in another sense.
Oh these immortal men! and their great motives!
But I must after my young charge. He is
By this time i' the forum. Charge! charge!
[CÆSAR *mounts the ladder; the scene closes.*

SCENE II.

The City. — Combats between the Besiegers and Besieged in the streets. Inhabitants flying in confusion.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. I cannot find my hero; he is mix'd
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doff'd their hats, 'twould be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire
Is of the self-same purple hue.

Enter a Party fighting — ARNOLD *at the head of the Besiegers.*

He comes,
Hand in hand with the mild twins — Gore and Glory
Holla! hold, count!

Arn. Away! they must not rally.

Cæs. I tell thee, be not rash; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,
I dipt thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides' heel; why then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.

Arn. And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were
Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar?

[ARNOLD *rushes into the combat.*

Cæs. A precious sample of humanity!
Well, his blood's up; and if a little's shed,
'Twill serve to curb his fever.

[ARNOLD *engages with a Roman, who retires towards a portico.*

Arn. Yield thee, slave!
I promise quarter.

Rom. That's soon said.

Arn. And done—
My word is known.

Rom. So shall be my deeds.

[*They re-engage.* CÆSAR *comes forward.*

Cæs. Why, Arnold! hold thine own: thou hast in hand
A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor;
Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.

Not so, my musqueteer; 'twas he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.
Arn. Ay, did he so?
Then he hath carved his monument.
Rom. I yet
May live to carve your betters.
Cæs. Well said, my man of marble! Benvenuto,
Thou hast some practice in both ways; and he
Who slays Cellini will have work'd as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks. (1)
[ARNOLD *disarms and wounds* CELLINI, *but slightly: the latter draws a pistol, and fires; then retires, and disappears through the portico.*
Cæs. How farest thou? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
Of red Bellona's banquet.
Arn. (*staggers*). 'Tis a scratch.
Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.
Cæs. Where is it?
Arn. In the shoulder, not the sword arm—
And that's enough. I am thirsty: would I had
A helm of water!
Cæs. That's a liquid now

(1) ["Levelling my arquebuse," says Benvenuto Cellini, "I discharged it with a deliberate aim at a person who seemed to be lifted above the rest: but the mist prevented me from distinguishing whether he was on horseback or on foot. Then turning suddenly about to Alessandro and Cecchino, I bid them fire off their pieces, and showed them how to escape every shot of the besiegers. Having accordingly fired twice for the enemy's once, I cautiously approached the walls, and perceived that there was an extraordinary confusion among the assailants, occasioned by our having shot the Duke of Bourbon: he was, as I understood afterwards, that chief personage whom I saw raised above the rest."—Vol. i. p. 120. This, however, is one of the many stories in Cellini's amusing autobiography which nobody seems ever to have believed.—E.]

In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.
Arn. And my thirst increases;—but
I'll find a way to quench it.
Cæs. Or be quench'd
Thyself?
Arn. The chance is even; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating;
Prithee be quick. [CÆSAR *binds on the scarf.*
And what dost thou so idly?
Why dost not strike?
Cæs. Your old philosophers
Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
Worth wrestling for, I may be found a Milo.
Arn. Ay, 'gainst an oak.
Cæs. A forest, when it suits me
I combat with a mass, or not at all.
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these labourers
Will reap my harvest gratis.
Arn. Thou art still
A fiend!
Cæs. And thou—a man.
Arn. Why, such I fain would show me.
Cæs. True—as men are.
Arn. And what is that?
Cæs. Thou feelest and thou see'st.
[*Exit* ARNOLD, *joining in the combat which still continues between detached parties. The scene closes.*

SCENE III.

St. Peter's — The Interior of the Church — The Pope at the Altar — Priests, &c. crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.

Enter CÆSAR.

A Spanish Soldier. Down with them, comrades! seize upon those lamps!
Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine!
His rosary's of gold!

Lutheran Soldier. Revenge! revenge!
Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now—
Yonder stands Anti-Christ!

Cæs. (*interposing*). How now, schismatic?
What would'st thou?

Luth. Sold. In the holy name of Christ,
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a Christian.

Cæs. Yea, a disciple that would make the founder
Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to plunder.

Luth. Sold. I say he is the devil.

Cæs. Hush! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognize you for his own.

Luth. Sold. Why would you save him? I repeat he is
The devil, or the devil's vicar upon earth.

Cæs. And that's the reason: would you make a quarrel
With your best friends? You had far best be quiet;
His hour is not yet come.

Luth. Sold. That shall be seen!

[*The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward; a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's Guards, and he falls at the foot of the Altar.*

Cæs. (*to the Lutheran*). I told you so.

Luth. Sold. And will you not avenge me?

Cæs. Not I! You know that "Vengeance is the Lord's:"
You see he loves no interlopers.

Luth. Sold. (*dying*). Oh!
Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crown'd with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reach'd him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'Tis
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon's
No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes! [*The Lutheran dies.*

Cæs. Yes, thine own amidst the rest.
Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo.* (1)

Cæs. Ha! right nobly battled!
Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions,

(1) [The castle of St. Angelo was besieged from the 6th of May to the 5th of June, during which time, slaughter and desolation, accompanied with every excess of impiety, rapine, and lust, on the side of the Imperialists, devastated the city of Rome. For this picture of horrors, see especially the "Sackage of Rome," by Jacopo Buonaparte, "gentiluomo Samminiatese, che vi se trovò presente," and "Life of Cellini," vol. i. p. 124.]

Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry. But the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.
Soldiers. He hath escaped!
Follow! [up,
Another Sold. They have barr'd the narrow passage
And it is clogg'd with dead even to the door.
Cæs. I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank
me for't
In part. I would not have his bulls abolish'd—
'Twere worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return;—no, no, he must not
Fall;—and besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof
Of his infallibility. [*To the Spanish Soldiery.*
Well, cut-throats!
What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.
And *you*, too, catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion:
See how they strip the shrines!
Soldiers. By holy Peter!
He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear
The best away.
Cæs. And that were shame! Go to!
Assist in their conversion.
[*The Soldiers disperse; many quit the Church, others enter.*
Cæs. They are gone,
And others come: so flows the wave on wave

Of what these creatures call eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the ocean,
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So, another!

Enter OLIMPIA, *flying from the pursuit— She springs upon the Altar.*

Sold. She's mine!

Another Sold. (*opposing the former*). You lie, I track'd her first; and were she
The Pope's niece, I'll not yield her. [*They fight.*

3*d Sold.* (*advancing towards* OLIMPIA). You may settle
Your claims; I'll make mine good.

Olimp. Infernal slave!
You touch me not alive.

3*d Sold.* Alive or dead!

Olimp. (*embracing a massive crucifix*). Respect your God!

3*d Sold.* Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.

[*As he advances,* OLIMPIA, *with a strong and sudden effort, casts down the crucifix: it strikes the Soldier, who falls.*

3*d Sold.* Oh, great God!

Olimp. Ah! now you recognize him.

3*d Sold.* My brain's crush'd!
Comrades, help, ho! All's darkness! [*He dies.*

Other Soldiers (*coming up*). Slay her, although she had a thousand lives:
She hath kill'd our comrade.

Olimp. Welcome such a death!

You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God! through thy redeeming Son,
And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him, and thee!

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. What do I see? Accursed jackals!
Forbear!

Cæs. (*aside, and laughing*). Ha! ha! here's equity!
The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue!

Soldiers. Count, she hath slain our comrade.

Arn. With what weapon?

Sold. The cross, beneath which he is crush'd; behold him
Lie there, more like a worm than man; she cast it
Upon his head.

Arn. Even so; there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honour'd her. But get ye hence,
And thank your meanness, other God you have none
For your existence. Had you touch'd a hair
Of those dishevell'd locks, I would have thinn'd
Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves,
But not even these till he permits.

A Sold. (*murmuring*). The lion
Might conquer for himself then.

Arn. (*cuts him down*). Mutineer!
Rebel in hell—you shall obey on earth!

[*The Soldiers assault* ARNOLD.

Arn. Come on! I'm glad on't! I will show you, slaves,
How you should be commanded, and who led you
First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,
As you are bold within it.

[ARNOLD *mows down the foremost; the rest throw down their arms.*

Soldiers. Mercy! mercy!

Arn. Then learn to grant it. Have I taught you *who*
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

Soldiers. We saw it, and we know it; yet forgive
A moment's error in the heat of conquest—
The conquest which you led to.

Arn. Get you hence!
Hence to your quarters! you will find them fix'd
In the Colonna palace.

Olimp. (*aside*). In my father's House! [no further need

Arn. (*to the Soldiers*). Leave your arms; ye have
Of such: the city's render'd. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.

Soldiers. (*deposing their arms and departing*). We obey!

Arn. (*to* OLIMPIA). Lady, you are safe.

Olimp. I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not—
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down
Upon destruction, shall my head be dash'd,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man!

Arn. I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.
Olimp. No! Thou hast only sack'd my native land,—
No injury!—and made my father's house
A den of thieves! No injury!—this temple—
Slippery with Roman and holy gore.
No injury! And now thou would preserve me,
To be——but that shall never be!

[*She raises her eyes to Heaven, folds her robe round her, and prepares to dash herself down on the side of the Altar opposite to that where* ARNOLD *stands.*

Arn. Hold! hold!
I swear.
Olimp. Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even hell would loathe thee.
I know thee.
Arn. No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though——
Olimp. I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me,
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeem'd infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

[OLIMPIA *waves her hand to* ARNOLD *with disdain, and dashes herself on the pavement from the Altar.*

Arn. Eternal God!
I feel thee now! Help! help! She's gone.
Cæs. (*approaches*). I am here.
Arn. Thou! but oh, save her! [done it well!
Cæs. (*assisting him to raise* OLIMPIA). She hath
The leap was serious.
Arn. Oh! she is lifeless!
Cæs. If
She be so, I have nought to do with that:
The resurrection is beyond me.
Arn. Slave!
Cæs. Ay, slave or master, 'tis all one: methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.
Arn. Words!—Canst thou aid her?
Cæs. I will try. A sprinkling
Of that same holy water may be useful.
[*He brings some in his helmet from the font.*
Arn. 'Tis mix'd with blood.
Cæs. There is no cleaner now
In Rome.
Arn. How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou essence of all beauty,
I love but thee!
Cæs. Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea: with his form it seems
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.
Arn. She breathes! But no, 'twas nothing or the
Faint flutter life disputes with death. [last
Cæs. She breathes.
Arn. *Thou* say'st it? Then 'tis truth.
Cæs. You do me right—

The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deem'd:
He hath an ignorant audience. [beats.
Arn. (*without attending to him*). Yes! her heart
Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wish'd to beat with mine should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.
Cæs. A sage reflection, [her?
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear
I say she lives.
Arn. And will she live?
Cæs. As much
As dust can.
Arn. Then she is dead!
Cæs. Bah! bah! You are so,
And do not know it. She will come to life—
Such as you think so, such as you now are;
But we must work by human means.
Arn. We will
Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitch'd my banner.
Cæs. Come then! raise her up!
Arn. Softly!
Cæs. As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.
Arn. But doth she live indeed?
Cæs. Nay, never fear!
But, if you rue it after, blame not me.
Arn. Let her but live!
Cæs. The spirit of her life
Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all things,
And this is a new office:—'tis not oft

I am employ'd in such; but you perceive
How stanch a friend is what you call a fiend.
On earth you have often only fiends for friends;
Now *I* desert not mine. Soft! bear her hence,
The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit!
I am almost enamour'd of her, as
Of old the angels of her earliest sex.

Arn. Thou!

Cæs. I! But fear not. I'll not be your rival.

Arn. Rival!

Cæs. I could be one right formidable;
But since I slew the seven husbands of
Tobias' future bride (and after all
'Twas suck'd out by some incense), I have laid
Aside intrigue: 'tis rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or—what is more difficult—
Getting rid of your prize again; for there's
The rub! at least to mortals.

Arn. Prithee, peace!
Softly! methinks her lips move, her eyes open!

Cæs. Like stars, no doubt; for that 's a metaphor
For Lucifer and Venus.

Arn. To the palace
Colonna, as I told you!

Cæs. Oh! I know
My way through Rome.

Arn. Now onward, onward! Gently!

[*Exeunt, bearing* OLIMPIA. *The scene closes.*

PART III.

SCENE I.

A Castle in the Apennines, surrounded by a wild but smiling country. Chorus of Peasants singing before the Gates.

CHORUS.

1.

The wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

2.

The spring is come; the violet's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow the on hills cannot blast her bower,
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

3.

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

4.

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December—
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthen'd hours;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget
The virgin, virgin violet.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæs. (*singing*). The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle.
The casque's on the wall.
There's rest for the rover;
But his armour is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall.
He drinks—but what's drinking?
A mere pause from thinking!
No bugle awakes him with life-and-death cal

CHORUS.

But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar's in the wood,
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood:
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble
With birds from their nest.

Oh! shadow of glory!
Dim image of war!
But the chase hath no story,
Her hero no star,
Since Nimrod, the founder
Of empire and chase,
Who made the woods wonder
And quake for their race.
When the lion was young,
In the pride of his might,
Then 'twas sport for the strong
To embrace him in fight;
To go forth, with a pine
For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
Or strike through the ravine
At the foaming behemoth;
While man was in stature
As towers in our time,
The first-born of Nature,
And, like her, sublime!

CHORUS.

But the wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, and we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo from every voice!

[*Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.*

END OF THE THIRTEENTH VOLUME.

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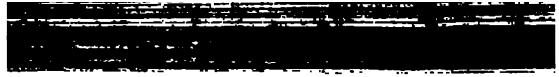

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